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The Nation.

February 8, 1986 $1.25; U.K. 65p

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EDITORIAL

THE FLIGHT THAT FAILED

That flash you saw on the television screen last Tuesday was a metaphor with many meanings: loss of innocence, heroic sacrifice, national tragedy. The fire and smoke and trailing debris composed a searing electronic icon that will stay in the mind's eye of everyone now old enough to focus on the picture. For it is iconics, not economics or patriotism or sentiment, that must explain the extraordinary global lurch in reaction to the Challenger explosion: the condolences from Queen, Pope and premiers, the compulsive media coverage, the sense of collective grief. In the great scheme of things, one small tragedy for man became one big symbol for mankind.

As the trauma diminishes in the weeks ahead another meaning will emerge from the doomsday events. The explosion that consumed Challenger should also reignite the controversy over the Star Wars nuclear defense system. President Reagan and the hi-tech freaks and hacks who are pushing the program have almost convinced the "opinion leaders" in America that it is logically possible and mechanically feasible to laser and pulse our way into nuclear primacy and national security. But any schoolkid in New Hampshire can now see that with a misfire rate no worse than the shuttle's, the Strategic Defense Initiative would be a dud or, worse, an engine of national suicide.

S.D.I. is no more a miracle shield than the shuttle is a vehicle for space exploration. Sensors explore; astronauts tinker. One launch of the unmanned Voyager has produced more exploratory science than twenty-four shuttles. Both Star Wars and the manned shuttle program are major military projects, lucrative corporate boondoggles and serious efforts in public relations and self-promotion for NASA. The tragedy is that it cost seven lives to reveal the scam.

HIJACKING LESOTHO
Christopher Hitchens

THE MYTH OF FULL EMPLOYMENT
Stanley Aronowitz

HOW REAGAN SUPPORTS SOUTH AFRICA
Thomas J. Downey

LOWER EAST SIDE WOMEN
Susan Strasser

SUGARMAN'S SCULPTURES
Arthur C. Danto

TRUMAN AND CORCORAN

THE TAPPING OF 'TOMMY THE CORK'

KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

In April 1976 the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, headed by Senator Frank Church, made its valedictory report on domestic spying and other intelligence agency abuses. The 2,000-page Church committee report identified victims of wiretapping abuses by name, including Martin Luther King Jr., several newsmen, and aides to Henry Kissinger.

The report also included a cryptic reference to the wiretapping of an unnamed "former Roosevelt White House aide" between June 1945 and May 1948. *The Washington Post* speculated that the person involved was Thomas (Tommy the Cork) Corcoran, an influential Washington lawyer and power broker. But the story went largely untold because the documentation linking it to Corcoran was lacking and because other revelations, especially the wiretap on King, dominated the media post-mortems. Now, however, a considerable body of evidence, including Corcoran's own substantial Federal Bureau of Investigation file, crucial internal Bureau memorandums and the wiretap transcripts themselves, has been made public, much of it under the Freedom of Information Act. The story of the most extensive partisan political wiretap instigated by any postwar President can at last be fully revealed.

The evidence shows that just six weeks after assuming the Presidency, Harry Truman had Edward McKim, his top aide and close friend, ask the F.B.I. to place a wiretap on Corcoran. Although the order for a tap on the flamboyant lawyer came from the White House, the idea that Truman might eavesdrop on his political

(Continued on Page 142)

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LETTERS.

THE PEOPLE'S ARCHIPELAGO

Los Angeles

"The Battle for Ellis Island," by Roberta Brandes Gratz and Eric Fettmann, got the warring factions right but missed the mark by a mile [Nov. 30].

The combatants were obvious stereotypes: John Burgee the corporate architect teamed with Lee Iacocca the bully, riding roughshod over the public interest, pitted against the Park Service, defenders of our priceless heritage. Wrong. It was the other way around. Every meeting I attended over a period of about two years had Burgee and Iacocca defending the right of the public to use and enjoy all of Ellis Island, and the Park Service insisting on leasing half of it away to private interests. So much for stereotypes.

The Park Service and the Interior Department's position was simple and clear: in order to preserve the crumbling hospital buildings and disease wards, they would give them away. Never mind that while preserving bricks and mortar they would violate the spirit and memory of the site and deny forever the public's right to use the entire island. The notion of a privately owned and operated luxury spa existing alongside America's historic portal shocked and outraged Iacocca, as well it might. That was the main reason he asked Burgee (and me) to study the Park Service master plan and come up with alternatives. He also envisioned a larger, more symbolic and dynamic role for the island than did the Park Service. Its interest was mainly in preservation and restoration. Iacocca wanted that too, and more: a reaffirmation of the spirit of Ellis Island, a place where recent immigrants could find their story and a place where descendants of immigrants (aren't we all?) could learn about the nation-building efforts of our forefathers and the vast contributions that immigrants made and are still making to this country. Our master plan tried to express those ideas. The "ethnic Disneyland" issue raised by Robin Winks of Yale University sounds Pecksniffian. He and others on the committee had a mortal fear that people might actually enjoy their visit to the island. Iacocca took his charge very seriously and so did we, but we were serious, not solemn, about it. A visit to Ellis Island could be a memorable emotional experience as well as an occasion for rejoicing and celebration.

The Park Service was not entirely unsympathetic, but the land-use issue kept cropping up. We could not tolerate "a great wall of Ellis" dividing the island: one side for ordinary visitors, the other side for corporate conferees using the pool, restaurant, tennis courts and yacht marina within sight of visitors but beyond their reach and means.

Another Pale of Settlement? Our attitude was that the thematic development of Ellis Island was paramount and that the hotel/conference center could be included only after all other functions had been satisfactorily resolved. I don't know how far that idea has progressed, since I am out of touch with the project, but I assure you that if the hotel/conference center has been modified from its original form, it's due entirely to our insistence and persistence.

Another mistake Gratz and Fettmann made was in implying that Burgee's intransigence prevented the two sides from getting together. Just the opposite was true. We tried mightily to meet with and exchange views with representatives of the Park Service and their consultants, often to no avail. Meetings were suddenly canceled, people never showed up and our program and plans were largely ignored. It got so bad that members of their team were even forbidden to talk to us. As far as the Park Service was concerned, we were a petty annoyance, an irritant that was best ignored or, at most, placated and barely tolerated.

Gratz and Fettmann were inaccurate in stating that my firm did the economic planning; we commissioned Harrison Price to do that for us. For the record, Price is one of the most respected authorities in his field. He told us that a revitalized Ellis Island, using all the space, could attract 2 million people. That was not a condition of development, rather a conservative estimate of potential visitation. It doesn't seem unrealistic given that in recent years the Statue of Liberty alone has had 1.8 million visitors.

Contrary to the tone of the article, our goal was not to dismantle the island and indiscriminately tear down its buildings. Following Iacocca's lead, we wanted to make it so expansive, all-inclusive and memorable that millions of people would want to go there and participate in its experiences. Is it wrong to think of one of America's primary symbols as a popular attraction? Or is it better to restrict the public to one or two restored buildings and reserve the rest of the island for the use of corporate conferees? And, if my guess is correct, provide a juicy, legal tax shelter for a fortunate few. *Herb Rosenthal*

GRATZ AND FETTMANN REPLY

New York City

Herb Rosenthal's letter is so self-serving that it bears no resemblance to the reality reported to us, even by John Burgee. If Lee Iacocca and Burgee had offered a plan to raise money and preserve *all* the buildings of Ellis Island for public use, Rosenthal's argument might be one to consider. At the point that such a plan is forthcoming—the preservation of all of Ellis Island for use by the public—we will be the first to offer congratulations and credit.

Roberta Brandes Gratz
Eric Fettmann

BAYING AT THE MOON

Washington

Lance Compa has made a strong and appealing case for independent political action by the labor movement ["Labor Independence," Dec. 14]. I too was embittered by the defeat of a very weak plant-closing bill in the House of Representatives last year, but it was hardly the fault of the Democratic Party leadership in the House.

Speaker Tip O'Neill once correctly said he presided over three or four parties. He had the labor Democrats (there must be fifty to one hundred of those in the House), middle-of-the-road Democrats (who generally have their finger up in the air to see which way the wind is blowing on a particular issue) and various kinds of conservative Democrats.

After twenty-two years of observing the political scene here in Washington, I am just as puzzled about what the winning political strategy is as when I arrived. Labor law reform, remember, came within a whisker of winning in the Senate, after passing in the House.

Let's face it, the nation is in a dangerously antilabor mood. Working people have an uphill battle in everything. . . . We must not walk away from those fifty or one hundred labor Democrats, or from the handful of moderate Republicans. To bay at the moon and be righteously alone is not the answer. Better to rally enthusiasm for those millions who work and struggle each day using whatever resources are available. *Franklin Wallick, editor*
UAW Washington Report

COMPA REPLIES

Washington

Franklin Wallick rightly poses labor's dilemma. I'm not sure we disagree that much; my article pointedly said that "a move toward independent political action does not necessarily entail cutting off support for decent liberal Democrats, or liberal Republicans."

Independent labor political action can indeed mean working hard for Democratic candidates in the 1986 elections, and most likely for the Democratic Presidential nominee in 1988. But it can also mean running labor-backed progressives against incumbents in Democratic primaries, supporting independent or minor-party candidates who seek union members' votes in a three-way race, backing liberal Republicans against Democratic hawks and any number of other steps. The point is for labor to stop being taken for granted by the Democratic Party, and to elect legislators who will stand by working people when it counts.

Singing the same old song, labor has not been able to rally the talent and enthusiasm of its rank and file for grass-roots political action. Somewhere between "Happy Days Are Here Again" and baying at the moon is an anthem that can do that. *Lance Compa*

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EDITORIALS.

Uncle Buttinsky

The menu for American intervention in the affairs of smaller states contains a sumptuous array of choices, from full-scale invasion to polite persuasion. The President makes his selection, and the taxpayers pay the check. The courses may be hot or mild: troops are sent for permanent war games in Honduras, or money is given to elect convenient candidates in El Salvador. Big guns from the battleship New Jersey pummel Moslem villages in Lebanon to shore up the Christian government, or a propaganda barrage is loosed in West Germany to help elect a Christian Democratic chancellor. But whether the interventionists buy off labor unions, promote insurrections or distribute disinformation, the effect is to interrupt the independent effort of people to make their own history.

A superpower has so many means of intervention at work at one time that it is often difficult to see the system in its full complexity, or to imagine what the world would be like without it. In South Africa, the United States has established such a significant business and financial presence—bolstered by political, military and cultural relationships—that the withdrawal of the merest amount of moral or monetary support is in itself an act of intervention. Israel is in such a state of clientage with the United States that debates

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in the Knesset or editorials in *Ha'aretz* are seen as suitable stuff for American comment, criticism and action. In Nicaragua, which has so far evaded clientage but not scrutiny, a censor has only to sneeze and half the Congress threatens to destroy the country.

The full force of the interventionist impulse is nowhere felt more strongly this winter than in the Philippines. The election campaign has become almost as much an event of American politics as it is a part of domestic affairs. In the first place, President Ferdinand Marcos's unexpected decision to hold elections came in response to demands from the Reagan Administration, which feared that an infusion of democratic legitimacy was needed to offset the growing popularity of the New People's Army. Then the American media rushed into the fray, picking its favorites on the basis of who would be best for U.S. interests, and determining the issues according to what would be most easily understood by the American mind.

The New York Times supplied the opposition's biggest break so far by questioning Marcos's record in the World War II Resistance. Several groups of not-so-neutral observers are already packing to go to Manila for a day of close poll watching on February 7. And one can only guess about the activities of the U.S. Embassy, the bankers, the corporate centurions, the freelance consultants and the hundreds of interested parties who are shaping the campaign to their own concerns.

All the reportage, the intelligence gathering and the expressions of concern from official and private American sources, on the spot and safely at home, amount to nothing less than a massive effort to intervene in Philippine politics. Hardly anyone has questioned the intervention this time because liberals and conservatives agree on the objective, the removal of Marcos. It was a bit different two years ago in El Salvador, when the American right wing was irked by the Administration's support for José Napoleón Duarte over an old ally, Roberto D'Aubuisson, the butcher who fell from favor. And some lonely leftists made a small fuss last year when the State Department tried to wreck the Nicaraguan elections by pressuring anti-Sandinista candidates to withdraw from the race.

But even the best of intentions—and seeking the disappearance of Marcos is hard to beat—should not justify the worst of policies. Historically, the American role in the Philippines has been a paradigm of imperial arrogance. The McKinley Administration grabbed the islands from Spain, and Teddy Roosevelt fought a bloody war of repression against an authentic native insurgency. Until World War II the Philippines was a colony pure and simple, and even after gaining formal independence it remains an economic, political and military outpost. Marcos could never have survived for two decades of tyranny without the approval and support of successive American governments. So intricate is the web of relationships that a break in any strand disrupts the whole structure. Trade, aid, cultural contacts, military compacts, all serve to keep the Philippines in a state of permanent dependence.

Elections seem to legitimize authority and stabilize the system so well in America that it is natural for policy-makers to export the process to markets under U.S. influence. It's like sending jeans and Coke and rock-and-roll to benighted nations whose underdevelopment has denied them such pleasures. The problem is not with the product—who doesn't want an honest ballot or a cold drink or a Springsteen album?—but with the trappings that come with it: the press, the pollsters, the poll watchers, the political fixers and finaglers, the consultants, the arrogant advice and the unshakable assumption that Americans have a *droit du seigneur* to go anywhere in the world and arrange everybody's life.

Broken Heartland

It has been a harsh, bitter winter in the Corn Belt and the High Plains. Snows began early in October, and wind-chill factors of 50 degrees below zero have been common. A brief thaw may help, but everyone knows more crunching cold is ahead. More unsettling than the winter, which people on the prairies are used to, is the uneasiness related to the farm crisis.

Last month, in Union County, which has the richest land in South Dakota, a young Farmers Home Administration supervisor killed his wife, daughter, son and dog while they slept, then went down to his office and shot himself dead. He left a note: "The job has got pressure on my mind, pain on left side." The wife had been fired from two secretarial jobs in two years. The family was from New York State and had lived in three South Dakota towns in the past nine years. The 12-year-old daughter had written a poem in school expressing her pain at having to move so often and leave new friends behind. Because the father was an out-of-stater, the Fm.H.A. moved him about the state, apparently figuring he would be more willing to get tough with local farmers who were behind on their loan payments than would a native South Dakotan.

South Dakota farmers are accustomed to hard times. The old-timers remember "the thirties," when the drought came, the dust blew and they put up tumbleweed hay to try to keep their few remaining cattle alive. The price of corn was so low that the farmers burned the ears in their coal stoves. Now nightmares of those years haunt the people.

Over in Worthington, Minnesota, some 250 farmers gathered recently to hear an activist tell them that they "have no moral obligation to repay an unjust debt" and that they would be right to use a gun to defend their farms from foreclosure. Enough of the lawless spirit of the Old West remains in rural America for people to reach for guns when all else fails.

Community spirit in the hinterland of America is not dead, but it is eroding. People still contribute rather small amounts to food pantries to help the most needy. But as they see their neighbors go bankrupt and move away, many take the community-destroying attitude that "people get what they have coming to them." Farmers who "have it made" (that is, happened to be around during the good

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years), or those who have not yet realized that they too are in danger, say, "He went in too deep," or "He should have known better than to take out all those loans."

Small towns are hard hit. High schools are closing as young families move to the city; those who remain are reluctant to have children in these uncertain times. Rural and small-town churches are rapidly losing members and are largely supported by the elderly.

On Saturday evenings some people tune in to "A Prairie Home Companion," broadcast out of St. Paul over American Public Radio, and enjoy Garrison Keillor's apt descriptions of life in Lake Wobegon, which seems so much like their hometowns. They know that there is something good about life in small-town America, but they wonder what is happening to that life in a high-tech, computerized, urbanized, war-threatening world. The only area of South Dakota that is booming is Ellsworth Air Force Base, near the Black Hills, to which cruise missiles and preparations for B-1 bombers have brought a fleeting prosperity.

The people are patriotic and for years have given their sons, and now their daughters, to the armed forces. Now they sense that the high-tech military binge is costing the nation a sound agriculture, and they ask, "Is this military overspend necessary?"

Congressional elections will be held this fall, and good candidates are surfacing in both parties. The incumbents, loaded with PAC money, claim that they have been the farmers' best friends in Washington, but they are in trouble as the distress in the Farm Belt grows more serious.

Meanwhile, the people of rural South Dakota, the Corn Belt and the High Plains, go valiantly ahead with life as usual as best they can. The high-school basketball games and tournaments are the main action in the towns fortunate enough still to have high schools. People still go to church, pray for the sick and troubled, try to help their neighbors when they can, and hope for a turnaround.

Unlike Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon, "where all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average," the people of small-town America feel they are going down the tube, and that neither the government nor anyone else in high-tech America gives a damn.

BOB MCBRIDE

Bob McBride has been a United Methodist minister in South Dakota for nearly thirty years.

At Home Abroad

London

I toted a copy of the Sunday *New York Times* home this morning, purchased from the one newsdealer here who still carries it. It's not a thing you'd do every week, for it costs £8.25, about $12; but on an irregular basis it makes a worthwhile investment, if only for the healthy shock it provides. It is not news to *Nation* readers that our newspaper of record has veered from its once mildly liberal course to a solidly right-wing one. What shocked me (in my relative isolation from the American media) were not the right-wing editorials, right-wing essays in the magazine, right-wing semantics in the news stories, which I fully expected, but the pervasiveness of this point of view in a wide range of articles on so many subjects. In every section, away from the news of the moment, the reader is given data with a dose of conservative philosophy or, to be less euphemistic, a dose of propaganda.

A maverick playwright who had written a drama about the Bay of Pigs is quoted by reporter Samuel Freedman as saying that there had been no anti-Castro underground waiting for the invasion "because Castro already had locked them up" and "the Americans weren't going to give the invaders the back-up support they promised." "But," Freedman continues, the play "does not offer conventional left-wing wisdom. . . . [It] directly lampoons one of liberalism's heroes, John F. Kennedy." With that little "but," Freedman in one fell swoop ascribes the right-wing version of the fiasco to the left (the real left-wing version is presumably outside his ken). He implies that the left shares "liberalism's" hero worship of Kennedy, and with his semantic twist, "left-wing wisdom," insinuates that the left's ideas are little more than redundant folklore.

A story about a news sheet in Nicaragua banned for attacking the government gets a four-column headline. It sounds like the kind of publication whose editors would be shot in a number of nations allied with us, but that is not my point. What bothers me is that unless you are a careful peruser of the story you might think that the publication banned was a newspaper with the power of *The Times* itself rather than a sheet with a circulation of about 300.

Elsewhere, in what used to be called a think-piece, James Markham describes how the youth of West Germany is becoming more conservative. A number of students are quoted by name. They all make disillusioned or born-again statements about their antinuclear, antipollution or anti-establishment pasts. They have "returned to conservative values," in Markham's words. There are five or six of them, which makes his sample equivalent to roughly one-six-thousandth of 1 percent of the West German student population. He also mentions unnamed "teachers and professors" and ends up with two heads of polling organizations who actually call young West Germans "relatively progressive" and who add that "lower-class West Germans" are "not necessarily" affected by Markham's "trend."

Public housing in Britain, under Labor, used to be in good shape and, more important, relatively available. There is a debate in my *Times* about the privatization of government services, and its proponent informs us that ever since Prime Minister Thatcher started selling off public housing, its residents have found "an incentive" to "improve" their dwellings. Nothing about the outcry caused here by that policy, which doomed the very concept of subsidized housing and which——, but why go on? I'm grateful it only spoiled my Wednesday morning, not my Sunday.

HANS KONING

Hans Koning is the author of De Witt's War *(Pantheon).*

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

During most of 1985 the antiapartheid forces in this country could have been forgiven for feeling that they had things all their own way. Bishop Desmond Tutu and the Mandelas became household names, President Reagan was pushed off his antisanctions position by the sheer force of public opinion, and the campaign for disinvestment acquired a momentum that would have been unthinkable a year previously. In various columns I have tried to say that this was a false dawn and that the reserve strength of apartheid and its allies had hardly been tested. In the first months of 1986 the Botha gang has served notice that this year is going to be different. It has hijacked an entire country, the kingdom of Lesotho. And it has been abetted in doing so by the United States government.

Lesotho is a sovereign state, a member of the United Nations. Despite being surrounded by South African territory, it had maintained a brave policy of independence and was resisting open threats from Pretoria concerning its hospitality to the African National Congress. In "Minority Report" for December 7, I wrote of an attempt on the life of its Prime Minister, Leabua Jonathan, and of South African support for a bogus Lesotho Liberation Army. A few weeks later, Maj. Gen. Justin Lekhanya of the Lesotho Armed Forces met with the Botha regime in Pretoria. The meeting coincided with an official visit to South Africa by Chester Crocker, a man of limitless self-deception where the aims and practices of apartheid are concerned. It also coincided with a South African blockade of Lesotho's borders. One week after the meeting, General Lekhanya made himself head of a junta, expelled the members of the A.N.C. and received the gloating congratulations of the apartheid authorities. He has since outlawed all political parties, struck various attitudes about "national unity" and scoffed at the idea of elections. On January 26, Pretoria warned the government of Botswana that it should expel the A.N.C. Washington doesn't recognize dominoes when they really are black and white.

I had the surreal experience of telephoning the State Department in Washington to ask for a comment on this chain of events. On day one of the coup the Administration had "no comment" at all. On day two it had "no comment" on "the possible role the blockade may have played in the coup." On day three a State Department spokesman said, "We have seen no indication of any direct outside involvement in the change in government."

Even with its furtive double qualifications ("*possible* role the blockade *may* have played") this is not credible; nor is it meant to be. South Africa, which landlocks Lesotho, imposes a blockade upon that country. It then receives the head of Lesotho's armed forces. This man then seizes power and does as South Africa asks by expelling South African dissidents. And the government of the United States goes on record as seeing no connection at all in this sequence. I hung up on the State Department feeling insulted and cheapened by merely having had the conversation.

The Southern African Development Coordination Conference, which is a kind of common market linking the independent states of the region, has just produced a report on the costs of South African destabilization. The report, which was written before the Lesotho *putsch*, calculates that the economies of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe have been robbed of $10.12 billion in the past five years. This figure includes the cost of direct war damage, increased transport and energy costs, lost exports and extra defense spending. It does not include the incalculable cost in human casualties. None of these countries has the kind of economy that can endure that sort of strain, and the plain fact is that millions of people will have to live the barest of lives as a result. The message to them from Ronald Reagan and his team is that all this is coincidence and that life is unfair. How lucky we are in the strength of the President's stomach.

The *Anschluss* in Lesotho was also ignored by the Democratic Party and by almost all the press. Even as I write, the National Press Club in Washington has announced a visit by "Johannes Savimbi, Angolian Freedom Fighter." The three errors in this trashy announcement nicely encapsulate the prevailing stupidity. By calling him Johannes we unconsciously claim Jonas Savimbi as an Afrikaner. By calling his country Angolia we cheerfully admit that all African countries look the same to us, and by terming him a freedom fighter we borrow the Kemp-Falwell definition of liberty.

* * *

The sledgehammer vandalizing of the antiapartheid exhibit at Dartmouth College had all the essential qualities of the Brave New Right. That's to say it was violent, cowardly, bigoted and puerile. That the yahoos of *The Dartmouth Review* should have chosen Dr. King's birthday for their effort may well have been an accident, but their magazine has made a practice of publishing slimy innuendoes about blacks, a return to "traditional standards" in humor that presumably delights the elders and patrons, like Irving Kristol, who put up the money. I wonder what Kristol's Institute for Educational Affairs will make of *The Review*'s extremely vulgar attack on affirmative action for Jewish students. The young swells denounce the idea because it would dilute the value of a degree.

"My own view" wrote Kristol in 1968 "is that a significant minority of today's student body obviously consists of a mob who have no real interest in higher education or in the life of the mind, and whose passions are inflamed by a debased popular culture." This is a better description of the Rambo-sodden pseudos on his payroll than it ever was of the courageous opponents of the Vietnam War. In those days, Kristol and his kind worried more about the protesters than the war. Today they are more offended by disinvestment campaigns than they are by apartheid. In neither case is their taste for thuggery very successfully concealed.

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ARTICLES.

CREATE WORK, NOT JOBS

The Myth of Full Employment

STANLEY ARONOWITZ

One hundred years ago, labor began the struggle to achieve the eight-hour day. The American Federation of Labor and other union groups demanded the shorter workday not only to relieve workers of the burden of twelve-to-fourteen-hour days but to share work that was becoming scarce in the wake of mechanization. Just as periodic unemployment was the scourge of the working class in the industrializing era, chronic joblessness is becoming the curse of the computer revolution.

It was not until 1938 that Congress passed the wage and hour law that, three years later, made the eight-hour day the standard for industry. That measure was arguably the most important New Deal innovation next to Social Security. It did more to create jobs than the Works Progress Administration.

Yet after the war the shorter workday was forgotten and liberals beat the drum for job creation as the best way to achieve full employment in an uncertain economy. For an understandable reason: work-sharing increases employers' costs unless they introduce labor-saving technology to make up their losses. By contrast, full-employment policies shift the responsibility for creating jobs to the government.

Full employment has been one of the most cherished goals of the progressive movement. Liberal economists and politicians framed social policy in terms of providing a job for everyone able to work, and trade unions and various freedom movements saw full employment as the fulfillment of America's promise of social justice, especially equality. Full employment meant the good life for all. There is another reason it became so sacred: Americans staunchly support the work ethic and believe that those without property should not become freeloaders on everyone else. People should contribute to society; work is considered the best way to fulfill that obligation.

For almost a half-century, full employment has been the centerpiece of the program of the New Deal coalition of trade unions, liberal employers, big-city politicians and social movements, particularly those of minority groups and women. Some Keynesian economists argue that full employment generates consumer demand, the necessary condition for economic growth. Moreover, they say, politics that promote growth will produce full employment. That is the justification for state intervention in the economy, especially with measures to stimulate investment. In this scenario, the welfare state does not merely guarantee economic justice; it maintains demand when the market cannot provide jobs for all who seek them. Unions have supported full employment because they want to reduce competition among workers. If everyone could find a job, wages would go up, they say, because employers would lose their pool of unemployed people willing to accept anything they are offered, or to serve as strikebreakers.

For minority groups and women, full employment has become a key to attaining equality. They have learned through many recessions that white male workers resist integration of the workplace when their own numbers are out of work. Tolerance depends on plenty. And all Americans have learned to measure a person's worth by whether he or she can bring home the bacon.

Full-employment policies usually encourage investment in the private sector to spur economic growth. The government lowers interest rates and awards contracts to private concerns. Only rarely does the government directly create jobs, as it did with the W.P.A. and some Great Society programs. For thirty years after World War II, the U.S. economy's performance seemed to confirm that full employment was possible. Some on the left, such as Michael Harrington and labor economist Leon Keyserling, insisted that government had to become the employer of last resort when the market refused to meet the demand for jobs; moderates committed to growth policies, such as Gardner Ackley, chair of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Johnson Administration, maintained that the powerful international economic position of the United States, combined with a permanent war economy, would maintain a level approximating full employment. They argued that the strong welfare state advocated by liberals was unnecessary. Before 1975 the question was not whether we could achieve a full-employment economy, but how. President Johnson sided with both groups, increasing military and social spending, a policy that was not substantially reversed by his immediate successors. Jimmy Carter trimmed government spending, but Ronald Reagan increased it massively to stimulate a sagging economy. Only he played a zero-sum game: welfare shrank, and arms spending soared. Contrary to the widespread perception that his Administration has departed radically from past practice, Reagan is a Keynesian—a military Keynesian. The mechanisms are somewhat different, but the goals and the strategy are the same.

The trouble is that government intervention is no longer effective at producing jobs. The United States has lost its exclusive dominion over the world economy. Japan, West Germany and several other countries have cut deeply into American markets. Moreover, the United States has become a net importer of energy, steel, automobiles and many other goods once produced almost exclusively at home.

To be sure, U.S. corporations have not taken competition lying down, but they have responded to the challenge by

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eliminating workers. They have closed outmoded plants, many of which still operated profitably, though not as profitably as overseas factories. As a result, U.S. investment abroad has doubled in the past decade. Corporations have automated the remaining plants, cutting the number of production workers by 25 percent. In the steel industry, the work force has declined from about 600,000 in 1961 to fewer than 250,000 today. Other industries, particularly the automotive industry, have experienced similar declines, even though production has increased or held its own. Plant closings, along with technological innovations like robotics, numerical controls and laser technology, destroyed jobs and devastated communities. America has become a postindustrial society. It will not stop producing goods, but there will be fewer people working to produce them than at any time since the post–Civil War era.

There is one astounding indication of this change: the current economic recovery has not reduced the level of hard-core unemployment. The real jobless rate, including discouraged workers and first-job seekers, has remained at 10 percent for the past five years. The next economic downturn could increase the real unemployment rate by 3 percent. By the year 2000 about one in six workers will be permanently unemployed. In addition there will be an even greater number of adults on public assistance—approximately 6 million of them at present—who are ready, willing (if day care and other services were provided) and physically able to work. All things considered, we are heading for a rate of permanently unemployed workers that is higher than 20 percent.

There are two possible objections to this discouraging picture. First, as the Reagan Administration correctly claims, more than 7 million jobs were created in the past five years. Most of them, however, were in low-wage, nonunion, dead-end service positions; 67 percent of the jobs created since 1975 pay less than $13,500 a year. And many are part time, the only work many women and older people can find. Second, more than 100 million people work for wages, including those in the military. But the jobs of at least one in six of those people depend on defense spending, and in the South and Southwest the proportion is much higher. In the unlikely event that peace breaks out, many of those jobs will disappear. More important, military spending does not create as many jobs as it did during World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars. Fewer workers are producing arms, and many of the available jobs require a high level of technical skill.

The number of jobs in the clerical area is also dwindling as automation invades the office. Banks and insurance companies now hire entry-level workers only to replace employees who have left or retired and who cannot be replaced by machines. The clerical employment boom is fading; the pink-collar worker is getting the pink slip.

The private sector has shown itself incapable of providing more than 100 million Americans with decent wages, dignified work and a chance for advancement and security. The public sector cannot take up the slack. Since the economic crunch of the late 1970s, public employment has stopped growing, and the computerization of the public workplace will eventually produce a net job decline. Even the wholesale and retail trades, the source of so many new jobs, have been computerized. In the meat-wrapping departments of Southern California supermarkets the number of jobs has dropped from 50,000 a few years ago to 10,000 today. New machines and prepackaging in factories are the culprits. In short, although there is still some relation between the overall level of economic activity and employment, the ties are much looser in the computer age. Growth and higher profits may be accompanied by unemployment because money is going toward labor-saving machinery and new information processes, not people.

There are two possible cures for the evolving jobless economy: work-sharing, to spread available employment; and income guarantees, to raise the economic level of the entire population. Work-sharing means shortening the workyear, the workweek and the workday by law and by union agreement. Overtime would have to be severely restricted so that the longer workday and week could not be restored by employers who refuse to hire more people. Work-sharing would require earlier retirement and a reversed layoff policy. Seniority would be used not to fire young workers but to enable old workers to retire. This would not mean that they could no longer work.

We would create work, though not necessarily jobs, by changing our idea of work time. Everyone would work part time for full-time income. Community, social service and other types of work would be performed by all. We would no longer penalize people by reducing their income when they cannot find jobs. And the growing trend to force those on public assistance to "work off" their checks under state supervision would be replaced by a form of community service controlled not by the bureaucracy but by those who perform the work and those who receive the services. Community-based work councils would determine services and

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allocate jobs in education, health and recreation, eliminating the coercive practices of the state.

There is much work to be done in our society. Women who want to enter the labor force are often stymied by the lack of day-care facilities for their children; people in their 50s and 60s are unable to find paid jobs. But our cities need rebuilding; the elderly need more, not fewer, services; children need better schools. The private sector simply does not have the capacity to meet those needs; and the government has a responsibility to do so.

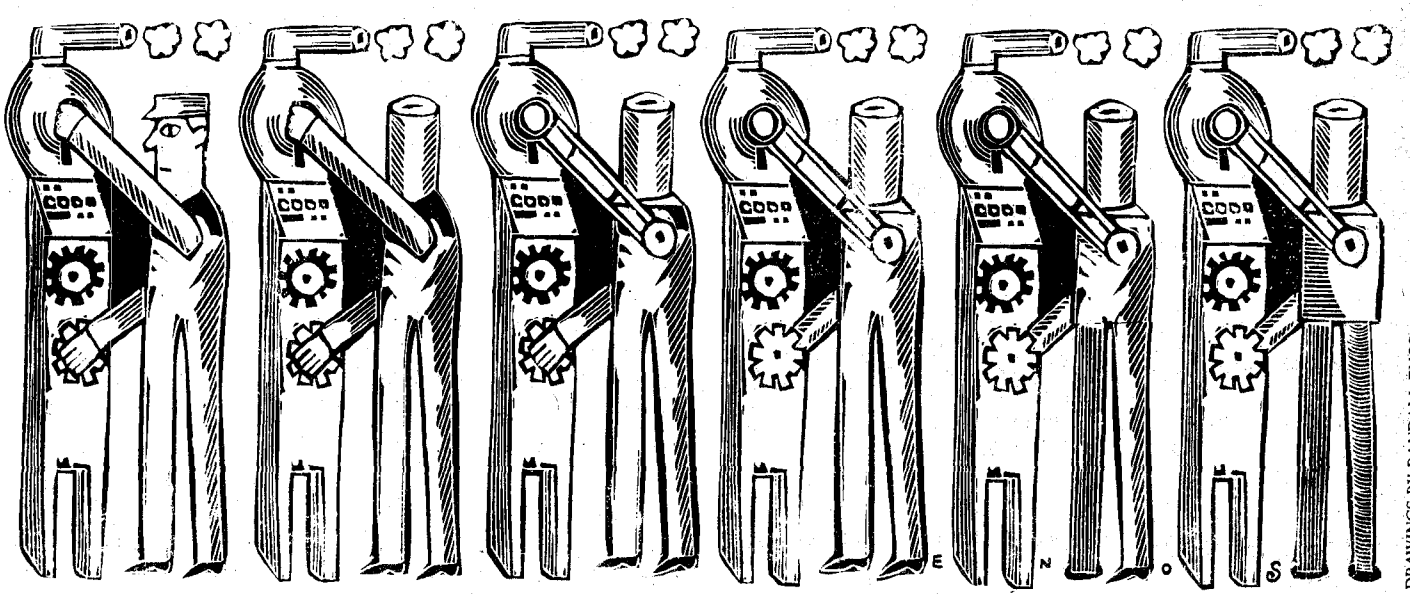
Beyond public sector jobs, society must provide alternatives to conventional employment, and in the process we must change our concept of work, education and public assistance. To begin with, we must distinguish work from wage labor. Work is the creative expression of a social or individual purpose. By freeing ourselves from the idea that the pay packet is the only route to dignity and self-esteem, we could erase the stigma from public assistance, which most of us receive at some time in our lives. Educational opportunities should be expanded so that adults who want to go to school can do so. Only the United States and Britain see advanced learning as a privilege; France offers completely free schooling to those who qualify, as do the Scandinavian countries. Those nations view education as a productive activity in the national interest.

These ideas fly in the face of the prevailing conservative wisdom that humans are inherently lazy and must be compelled to work. Freud believed that to be a universal law, and Hobbes argued that if even a small minority is immune to self-discipline, society suffers. There is considerable evidence that people shirk boring tasks over which they have no control. But if offered work that is genuinely satisfying and useful, most would choose to participate. The options available to most women and young people, such as service in fast-food chains, part-time word processing and jobs in the underground economy (usually off the books), contribute neither to self-esteem nor to society. Many women on public assistance would rather stay home with their kids, since the low wages the available jobs pay do not cover day-care services. Young people accept low-paying service jobs because there is no alternative: their jobless rate is close to 50 percent in many parts of the country; among young blacks in Midwestern cities it is as high as 65 percent.

How can we bring about work-sharing and guaranteed income? First, we need a debate on the left. Many trade unionists may object to abandoning the idea of full employment, although some feminists have already rejected it because it does not necessarily help women. Eventually, that would trigger a national debate. Some liberals in Congress would have to be persuaded to introduce bills that would shorten the workday and week and guarantee income to all Americans. But the crucial issue is whether unions, feminists, blacks and neighborhood activists are prepared to organize among the unemployed and the underemployed. Unless the jobless lead the way and employed workers join the battle, nothing will happen. Some efforts are already under way, but the unions do not yet support them. When they do, the plan will become more realistic.

Where would the money come from? conservatives and neoliberals cry whenever someone proposes expanding social services. That is the wrong question. The right one is, Can we afford the consequences of proceeding on the old track? Of course there is money. But we would have to redistribute capital from the private to the social sector; we would have to shift our priorities from arms to people. Although there are many problems with the program I have proposed, the basic issue is whether the current distribution of social capital and social time is economically and technologically necessary.

In all the talk about the need for new ideas among progressives, the obvious demand for work and income has been largely submerged under the old and defeated rubric of "full employment." Since full employment is not in the cards, given the prevailing political and ideological arrangements, solutions will be found by others if the left does not act. We need a radical approach that is at least as bold as the demand of the labor movement a century ago for liberation from meaningless and exploitative work. If the



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political forces of reform cannot meet the challenge, we can expect a major political realignment such as occurred in mid-nineteenth century America, when the two old parties refused to face the reality of slavery. □

MARCHING WITH PRETORIA

Reagan's Real Aims In South Africa

THOMAS J. DOWNEY

This week Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi will be in Washington seeking Congressional support for his group, Unita. Savimbi's visit, which will include a lecture to the Heritage Foundation on February 6, can be seen as the kickoff of an Administration effort to redefine its South Africa policy. Most legislators thought the battle over how best to oppose the apartheid regime had ended last September 9, when President Reagan, dramatically reversing his position, signed an executive order that imposed limited economic sanctions on the government of South Africa. To many observers, it was at least a partial victory for those opposed to apartheid, and the beginning of the end of the Reagan policy of "constructive engagement."

However, there are a number of initiatives before Congress that, though few people have seen the connection, are of a piece with constructive engagement. Last summer the House of Representatives repealed the Clark amendment prohibiting aid to Unita forces, which are attempting, with South Africa's help, to overthrow the government of Angola. Now Congress is considering a number of bills to grant "humanitarian" and military assistance to Unita. It also has legislation pending to supply the forces of Renamo, which, also supported by South Africa, seeks to overthrow the government of Mozambique. And in an interview with *The New York Times* on January 25, Secretary of State George Shultz called on Congress to pass a general resolution expressing moral support for Unita.

When the Reagan Administration came to Washington in 1981 it had a broad agenda for southern Africa. It sought to end the conflict in Namibia and effect a decolonization of that territory. It also wanted to spur the departure of the Cubans from Angola and end the cross-border violence throughout the region. Finally, and most obviously, it endorsed the South African government's program of mild reforms of apartheid within the existing political and economic structure.

Those aims were pursued by giving direct and indirect support to South Africa. The indirect support was intended to be quiet. When, in March 1981, Adm. Willem du Plessis and Lieut. Gen. P.W. van der Westhuizen, the chief of staff for intelligence of the South African Defense Forces, became the first high-ranking South African military officers to visit the United States since 1974, their trip was secret, ostensibly made without the approval or knowledge of the State Department. But it was widely seen as a sign of the Reagan Administration's desire to forge closer ties with the apartheid regime. Two months later Foreign Minister Roelof (Pik) Botha made an official visit to the United States. Within five months of Reagan's taking office there were clear signs that constructive engagement meant a closer relationship with the racist regime.

The direct support took the form of continued opposition to sanctions. In the aftermath of the massive South African invasion of southern Angola in August 1981, the United States was the only one among North American and Western European nations working for a Namibian settlement that did not denounce the action. The next month the United States vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the invasion. In 1982 the United States worked overtime to secure a $1.1 billion loan for South Africa from the International Monetary Fund, even though the government was raising the military stakes in the region and there was little evidence of change within the country.

During its first four years, the Administration opposed U.N. Security Council motions against South Africa and fought Congressional attempts to impose sanctions. At each stage the public was told that the Administration's efforts to bring about change in South Africa were quietly yielding results.

In fact, there is precious little to show for five years of coddling apartheid. The attempts to jolly Pretoria along were almost embarrassing in their naïveté. Last August, for example, the United States and South Africa met in Vienna to solidify U.S. support for the South African government's latest attempts to promote limited reform. Returning from Vienna, Administration officials promised peace in our time in South Africa and said that President P.W. Botha would announce major reforms in apartheid in a speech to his party on August 15. But in that speech Botha directed a stinging rebuke to the Administration: "I find it unacceptable to be confronted in this manner with an accomplished fact. This is not my way of doing it, and the sooner these gentlemen accept it, the better." The South African President went on to outline a program of business as usual for apartheid.

Ever tolerant, the Administration, via an anonymous spokesperson, suggested that the South African government was "shoot[ing] itself in the foot," and said that the White House hoped that the speech would be clarified in the weeks to come. No one in the South African government came forward to do so, however. Why? Because there was no ambiguity.

As Botha's speech demonstrated, constructive engagement is a one-way street. The South African government is not even grateful for the five-year breathing space it has had. Where is the change that was promised?

Since the end of last year the international and South African business community has applied unprecedented pressure for change on Pretoria, to little effect. According

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to the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, more than 10,800 people have been detained in South Africa since January 1985. Most of those detentions have come since the state of emergency was declared, on July 20. During the third week of November, thirty-three blacks were killed, thirteen of them in Mamelodi, outside Pretoria, when police fired into a crowd of 50,000 Africans protesting rent increases. Fourteen people were killed in rioting outside Queenstown in the Eastern Cape. In the fifteen months since the present crisis erupted, more than 1,000 deaths have been officially recorded by the government.

It is against this backdrop that the renewed effort to provide assistance to Unita must be seen. At the time of the debate on the Clark amendment, some of those who supported its repeal argued that they did not favor funding Unita. They simply wished to untie the President's hands and remove a problematic restriction on U.S. foreign policy in the region. No aid to Unita was envisioned. Now it is clear that the repeal of the amendment was the first step down the road toward active U.S. intervention on the side of South Africa in the regional struggle.

Because constructive engagement has been seen by the public simply in terms of South Africa—that is, as a way of opposing apartheid—those involved in the policy debate have tended to treat the Unita issue as separate from the question of South African internal policies. But constructive engagement is directed at the entire region. The United States is lining up with Botha in an attempt to impose a supposedly more stable order in southern Africa. Pretoria's August 1981 attack on Angola was not an isolated incident. That same year South African commandos raided Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, and Pretoria increased its support for the rebels of the Mozambican National Resistance, the name by which Renamo is formally known. In 1982, Renamo forces destroyed a major refinery in Mozambique. South African troops carried out a helicopter attack on Maseru, the capital of Lesotho, in which forty-two people were killed. Angola endured a South African occupation of its southern territory for three years. South Africa was clearly on the offensive. The Administration has fully backed Pretoria's tactic of denying foreign havens to the opponents of apartheid.

By late 1983, South African military pressure, together with economic crises in some of the front-line states and famine in the region, had left the neighboring countries in an extremely vulnerable position. The United States stepped into the breach and acted as mediator between South Africa and its victims. In February 1984, under U.S. auspices, the Angolans and the South Africans concluded the Lusaka Agreement, which set up a joint commission to monitor the disengagement of South African troops from southern Angola. The following month, with the United States again playing the role of midwife, the Nkomati Accord was negotiated between South Africa and Mozambique. That treaty aimed to halt South African support for rebels attempting to overthrow the Mozambican government and to end South African attacks on economic targets in Mozambique. In return, the Mozambican government agreed to prohibit military activity of the African National Congress from bases inside its territory.

The South African withdrawal from Angola provided for in the Lusaka Agreement supposedly indicated that the protracted negotiations on independence for Namibia were nearing completion. Yet almost two years later South Africa continues its incursions into Angola, and Namibia is no nearer independence than it was in 1984, or indeed in 1981, when constructive engagement was conceived. In the past year, South Africa has renewed its support for Mozambican rebels, in violation of the Nkomati Accord. And the Administration may be preparing for a more direct intervention by supporting groups such as Unita and Renamo. On November 23, *The Washington Post* reported that the Administration was considering a two-pronged policy of covert action and diplomatic pressure against the government of Angola. This more aggressive policy represents an attempt to justify continued support for the Botha regime by focusing on the Cuban presence in Angola at a time when events in South Africa are moving toward increasingly violent confrontations.

In Washington the stage is set for an important foreign policy confrontation that will affect U.S. policy in Africa for decades to come. Congress is sharply divided on the question of providing aid to Unita, and public attention has not yet been focused on the debate, largely because Unita's supporters have been able to divorce the group from the apartheid regime in the media. The American Republic Foundation (established by the College Republican National Committee), the American Angolan Public Affairs Council and the lobbying firm of Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly have mounted an expensive campaign to refurbish Unita's

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tarnished image. They have met with some success: a favorable profile of Savimbi appeared in *The New York Times* on November 9, and a pro-Unita film, *The Challenger*, was shown on Capitol Hill on November 8 in a House committee room.

As long as the spotlight is shifted away from constructive engagement and the aggressive nature of apartheid, the Administration will be successful in its attempt to save the Botha government. □

FAMINE UPDATE

In Ethiopia, Food Is a Weapon

JONATHAN B. TUCKER

More than a year after the West began a major famine-relief effort in Ethiopia, starvation still threatens Eritrea and the northern provinces of Tigray and Wollo, where the Ethiopian Army is engaged in brutal wars against antigovernment guerrillas. Although last summer's rains broke the three-year drought and should have produced a good harvest, the fighting has displaced so many peasants that the fall crop reached only 25 percent of its potential. Meanwhile, some 5 million noncombatants in the north remain trapped behind military lines, deprived of access to the international relief assistance pouring into Ethiopia.

Although the United States has the means to feed these people, the Reagan Administration has given priority to its strategic ambition of winning Ethiopia back to the Western camp. For thirty years after World War II, the United States enjoyed close ties with Emperor Haile Selassie and was the dominant naval power in the Red Sea, protecting the vital sea lanes used by oil tankers traveling from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean and Western Europe. But in 1974, Selassie was overthrown by a Marxist military junta called the Dergue, which turned to the Soviet Union as its ally and arms supplier. In return the Russians gained a naval base on Ethiopia's Dahlak Islands in the Red Sea, a potential choke point against Western Europe's oil lifeline.

Massive U.S. relief assistance to Ethiopia in the past year has failed to win over the Dergue, but the Administration is persisting in its courtship. "We would love to improve our relationship with Ethiopia, and we are continually making that known to them," said Jean Szymanski, desk officer for Ethiopia at the State Department. As a result of that policy, however, the Administration has become a tacit accomplice in the Dergue's ruthless military tactics in the north, which are mainly responsible for the famine's persistence.

Most of northern Ethiopia today is under the control of antigovernment guerrillas. In Eritrea, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front holds sway; in Tigray, the Tigray People's Liberation Front; and in Wollo, the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement. While government troops occupy the major cities, highways and several garrison towns, the rebels control 85 percent of the countryside in Eritrea and Tigray and much of northwest Wollo.

Since 1977 the Dergue has launched eight major offensives in the rebel-controlled zones. Last summer ground forces destroyed hundreds of villages, farms and granaries, and Ethiopian MIGs bombed clinics, schools and markets. The fighting also disrupted famine-relief operations. In Eritrea and Tigray the Ethiopian Army commandeered relief vehicles to carry troops and matériel, and diverted some of the food to its soldiers. Indeed, reported Edward Girardet in *The Christian Science Monitor*, "denying relief access to guerrilla zones appears to be part of Ethiopian military strategy" [see Tucker, "The Politics of Famine in Ethiopia," *The Nation*, January 19, 1985]. Yet despite the Dergue's scorched-earth tactics, the civil wars have remained bloody stalemates.

Over the past few years, a handful of Western charities working from the neighboring Sudan have quietly provided emergency aid to two organizations working inside the rebel-controlled areas, the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) and the Relief Society of Tigray (REST). Those organizations truck relief supplies across the border from the Sudan into northern Ethiopia; from there, pack-animal caravans transport them behind Ethiopian military lines to famine victims in remote highland villages. The United States has donated some food to this cross-border operation. Because aid to the rebel-controlled areas is anathema to the Dergue, the food is packed in unmarked bags and channeled through the Western charities in the Sudan. U.S. officials refuse to discuss the program on the record. In any case, the amount of U.S. aid to ERA and REST has been inadequate.

Early last year starvation in the rebel-controlled areas of Eritrea and Tigray was so widespread that hundreds of thousands of famine victims migrated to refugee camps in the Sudan in a desperate search for food. Because this massive exodus threatened to destabilize the Sudan's pro-American government, Vice President George Bush met with Sudanese President Gaafar el-Nimeiry in Khartoum in early March and agreed on a major expansion of the cross-border relief operation. (Nimeiry was later overthrown in a military coup; the new regime, under Gen. Abdul Rahman Sewar el-Dahab, has continued to permit the flow of aid across the border despite Ethiopia's efforts at subversion.)

On March 11, Bush was in Geneva to attend a conference on the African famine. Ethiopian Foreign Minister Goshu Wolde was also present, and after a public exchange of hostile rhetoric, the two officials negotiated behind the scenes. In return for a tacit U.S. commitment not to step up its involvement in the cross-border operation as much as it had planned to, Wolde permitted three private agencies—Catholic Relief Services, World Vision and the International Committee of the Red Cross—to distribute U.S. assistance at new feeding centers in government-controlled

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garrison towns deep inside the rebel-held areas of Eritrea and Tigray. The Dergue refused to negotiate a cease-fire or to guarantee the safe passage of relief supplies across military lines, insisting instead that famine victims living in the countryside travel to the towns to collect their rations.

The details of the new program, dubbed the Food for the North Initiative, were hammered out in a series of meetings between Ethiopian officials and relief-agency representatives, and were approved by the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa. Meanwhile, the Administration cut back its planned increase in assistance to the cross-border operation by more than 50 percent.

Given the White House's support for "freedom fighters" in Afghanistan, Angola and Nicaragua, one would expect it to help Ethiopian guerrillas fighting against the Soviet-backed Marxist government in Addis Ababa. But the opposition fronts in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia are fiercely nonaligned, and their goals run counter to American geopolitical interests in the region. U.S. policy-makers oppose Eritrean independence because it would deprive Ethiopia of its 620 miles of Red Sea coastline, the key to the country's strategic value. Similarly, they want a unified Ethiopia that they can influence, while the rebel groups in Tigray and Wollo hope to overthrow the Dergue and establish a decentralized, multiethnic government. According to correspondent Paul Vallely of *The Times* of London, "For Washington, a Yugoslav-style socialism in Ethiopia would be far preferable to the unknown quantity of a new regime heavily dominated by strong, victorious rebel groups."

Major Ethiopian military offensives last spring and summer delayed implementation of the Food for the North Initiative until the end of August, when Catholic Relief Services and the Red Cross opened feeding centers at garrison towns in Eritrea and Tigray. Richard Eney, desk officer for Ethiopia at the U.S. Agency for International Development, said, "The Dergue was initially unenthusiastic about the program, but now that it's started, they've done a complete about-face and are encouraging the agencies to expand it still further."

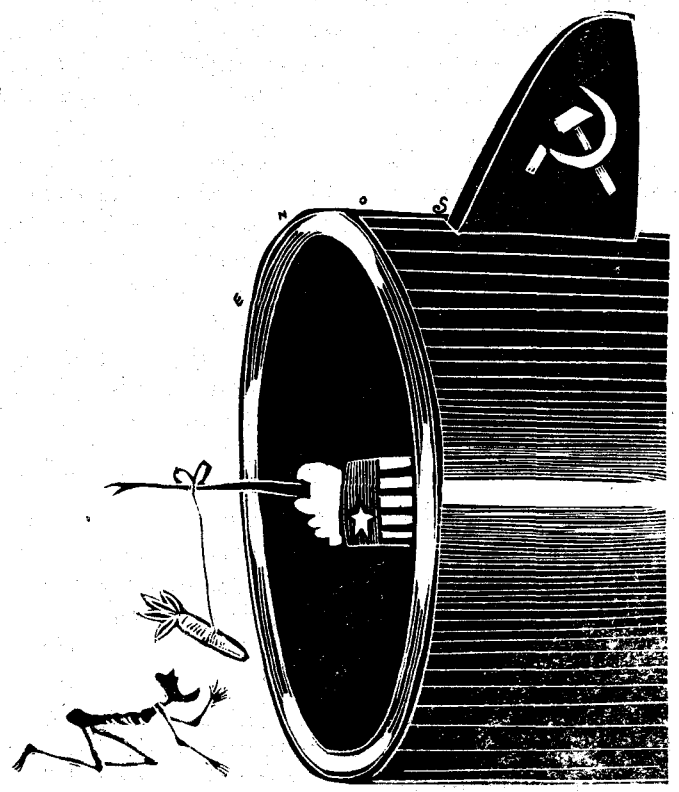
The Dergue has exploited U.S. relief assistance to lure people from the rebel-held areas to the garrison towns, where they can be registered and controlled. Since all able-bodied young men from the rebel-held areas are considered potential guerrilla recruits, they have been conscripted into the Ethiopian Army or forcibly resettled in distant parts of the country, often under inhumane conditions. According to a December report by Doctors Without Borders, a French relief group, more than 100,000 people have died of starvation and disease as a result of the resettlement.

Critics also contend that the Dergue has used the Food for the North Initiative to "pacify" the population in the rebel-controlled areas seized by the Ethiopian Army during last year's offensives. Sweeps by tens of thousands of Ethiopian troops through the highlands resulted in the burning of cropland and villages. At the same time, the disruption of relief operations originating in the Sudan created the need for emergency assistance, this time coming from the Ethiopian government. The Dergue's strategy is to convince the peasants that they can obtain more food by coming to the official feeding centers than by remaining with the rebels. Indeed, war and hunger have driven many peasants off their land, forcing nearly 25,000 into the Sudan as refugees and thousands more into the garrison towns to obtain U.S.-supplied relief.

Proponents defend the Food for the North Initiative saying that it has at least increased the number of people being fed. But Chris Cartter, Africa program coordinator for Grassroots International, argues that the initiative's humanitarian benefits are undercut by its military and political implications. "The program is admittedly saving some lives," he said, "but by contributing to conscription and resettlement, it's also causing additional casualties. In a sense, the program offers logistical backup to Ethiopia's military campaigns."

According to Vallely, the pacification program involves the tacit collusion of the United States and the Soviet Union. Although Washington would like to replace Moscow as Ethiopia's strategic ally, the superpowers have a common interest in preventing a victory by rebel forces while vying for influence with the central government. Thus, the Soviet Union provides the Dergue with arms and military advisers to fight the rebels, and the Reagan Administration allows the regime to use U.S. aid to consolidate its gains.

The victims are the millions of starving noncombatants in the rebel-held areas who are being denied access to international relief programs. The feeding centers in the garrison towns are helping only a small fraction of the hungry; the vast majority either live too far away or fear harassment by Ethiopian troops guarding the outskirts of the towns. And although ERA and REST are capable of reaching remote villages in Eritrea and Tigray, they have received only



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enough food through the cross-border operation to meet the needs of 25 percent of the famine victims there. (They have no operations in Wollo.)

Critics of this country's aid policy argue that the United States has a moral obligation to provide more food to ERA and REST, even if it means alienating the Ethiopian government. "The State Department knows that ERA is reaching famine victims in an efficient manner, without corruption," said Kevin Conway, director of development and outreach for the Eritrean Relief Committee, a U.S.-based charity. "So there's no good reason why more aid isn't being channeled through the cross-border operation."

Unless and until the bloody wars in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia are ended by a negotiated settlement (perhaps through a U.S.-Soviet diplomatic effort), the fate of the people there will become increasingly bleak. "The Ethiopian government's combined policies of forced resettlement, denial of food aid to rebel-held areas, annual offensives and massive bombardment of civilian targets amount to a kind of genocide," said Gayle Smith, coordinator of REST's Washington office. "I shudder to think what Eritrea and northern Ethiopia will be like in a few years if the Dergue's plan succeeds." □

Tapping

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

enemies was planted by J. Edgar Hoover, who was resentful of Corcoran's supposed efforts to depose him and eager to ingratiate himself with the untried President. The F.B.I. promptly installed the tap but, contrary to Justice Department rules on warrantless wiretaps, never obtained oral or written approval for it from Attorney General Tom Clark. For more than two years, Truman received summaries and transcripts from the round-the-clock tap through his military aide and poker companion Gen. Harry Vaughan. Truman retained the wiretap reports and transcripts in his personal files until his death, in 1972. Then they were deposited in the Presidential library in Independence, Missouri. The transcripts remained closed until Corcoran died, in December 1981, and were only recently opened to researchers.

The conversations of Tommy Corcoran cover a diverse range of foreign and domestic issues, which is not surprising, since he regularly chatted with such movers and shakers as Nelson Rockefeller, Drew Pearson, Harold Ickes, Lister Hill, Henry Morgenthau, Tom Clark, Francis Biddle, Alfred McCormack, Donald Hiss (Alger's brother), Abe Fortas and James Forrestal. The transcripts will be required and highly colorful reading for historians writing about the purging of the New Dealers from the Truman Administration, the use of the atomic bomb, early McCarthyism, the China lobby, Democratic politics and the machinations of Washington power brokers.

In the transcripts, Corcoran says Truman is "dumb" because he thinks he can "surround himself almost entirely with mediocre Missourians and run the greatest country in the world." He describes his own "troubles" with what he calls "the pro-Russians in the [F.D.R.] White House." He calls liberals, including Henry Wallace, Claude Pepper and Hugo Black, "a bunch of guys that had the world in their hands last year" and are now "a helpless bunch of sheep." He tells columnist Drew Pearson in August 1945 that he thinks the only reason the United States hasn't dropped more atom bombs on "the Japs" is that "we and the British are sort of in an anti-Russian way and want to try to keep the Japs together as a nation," whereas "the Russians and the Chinks want to bust that nation up." Commiserating with the newly fired Nelson Rockefeller, he blames Rocky's fate on "that wild Commie-kike crowd that are sure that if you're not willing to dissolve all existing forms of society to their benefit you're an s-o-b."

Why did Truman do it? Why Tommy Corcoran? A graduate of Harvard Law School and protégé of Felix Frankfurter, Corcoran was one of the many young men attracted to Washington by the New Deal. In 1933, with Ben Cohen, a shy lawyer from Muncie, Indiana, the 32-year-old Corcoran took an obscure position in the executive branch for the respectable wage of $8,000.

Corcoran and Cohen's first task was to draft the Federal Securities Act of 1933. "Corcorancone," as the press dubbed them, went on to collaborate on some of the most important legislation passed during the Roosevelt era: the Tennessee Valley Act of 1933, the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the Federal Housing Administration Act of 1934 and the Public Utilities Act of 1935. Many were drafted during all-night sessions at the "little house on R Street," which Corcoran and Cohen shared with other young New Deal lawyers.

In 1940, Corcoran left the government and a year later opened his own Washington law office. The Wall Street interests that had damned Corcoran for his "irresponsible experimentation" suddenly flocked to his office, and in his first year of practice he earned $259,000. Almost imperceptibly, a split developed between Corcoran and some of his erstwhile colleagues. As historian John Morton Blum notes: "Corcoran was regarded by his fellow New Dealers as a man who had once done a lot of good. They would therefore still befriend him, but not entrust public matters in his hands."

Truman's distrust of Corcoran was more visceral. He was not at home with the old New Dealers, who thought him unworthy of Roosevelt's mantle. Tommy the Cork opposed Truman's nomination as Vice President and, like many Roosevelt liberals, supported Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas for that slot. In March 1947 an F.B.I. official reported to Hoover that the President repeatedly expressed "to a considerable number of people the fact that there were four persons who were 'poison' to him, with whom he would never make peace and whose views and associates he would always oppose. One of the four was Tommy Corcoran."

In 1948, Corcoran backed Douglas for the Presidency. When Truman, assured of a first-ballot nomination, offered the Justice the number-two slot, Douglas politely refused.

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His most enthusiastic backer, Corcoran, reportedly said at the time, "Why be a number-two man to a number-two man?" During the ensuing campaign Truman wrote in his diary: "He [Douglas] belongs to that crowd of Tommy Corcoran, Harold Ickes, Claude Pepper crackpots whose word is worth less than Jimmy Roosevelt's. . . . No professional liberal is intellectually honest."

Truman may also have regarded Corcoran as a shady character, engaged in some kind of illegal activity. When the Truman committee conducted its investigations into war profiteering, Corcoran was summoned to testify about the large fees he had received from defense contractors and his alleged influence peddling. Hoover may have preyed on Truman's distrust of Corcoran by holding out the prospect that the tap would produce evidence of corruption. In sum, Truman may have thought he was acting for clean government.

Hoover also had reasons for wanting to take Corcoran down a peg or two. A 1964 profile of Tommy the Cork in the Bureau's files, which was released to Corcoran under the F.O.I.A., says in part:

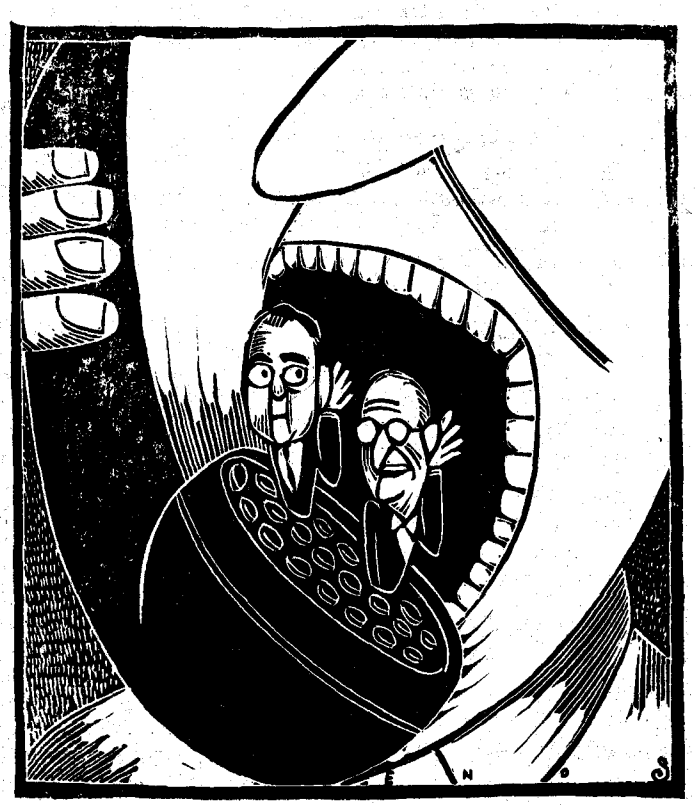
> We have had considerable difficulty with Corcoran in the past. In 1940 [when the Bureau started its file on him] it was reported that Corcoran was the "Brains" behind a campaign to smear the Director and have him removed as head of the F.B.I. It was reported at that time that "Corcoran had been nursing a long-time animosity for Hoover" and was intent on driving him into private life.*

If politics is the accumulation of obligations, Hoover was intent on putting his new boss into debt. A month and a half after Truman was sworn in, the Director introduced the White House to the political bounty that could be derived from wiretaps. On May 23, 1945, Hoover provided Truman's trusted aides McKim and Vaughan with a "Personal and Confidential" report concerning the activities of a prominent New Dealer, Edward Prichard Jr., a high-level official in the White House. Included were transcripts of conversations that Prichard had had with Felix Frankfurter and Drew Pearson. The Church committee was never able to establish who authorized this wiretap or what its purpose was. Hoover might have initiated it on his own authority—to test the waters, so to speak.

The bait proved irresistible. On June 2, 1945, McKim told the F.B.I.'s liaison to the White House, M.E. Gurnea, about Truman's reaction to the revelations from the Prichard tap. According to an F.B.I. document, McKim said he had been "afraid to show it to the President until they were on the [President's] boat and out in the river," and that Truman, after reading it, said that some parts of it were "comical" and that overall it was the "damnedest thing I have ever read." McKim told Gurnea that "he and the President" wanted the Prichard tap to continue. Then, according to Gurnea, McKim said that "Thomas Corcoran has also been engaged in questionable activities, and that he wanted a technical placed on his telephone line."

There were two separate taps on Corcoran. The first lasted from June 1945 until April 1947, and the second from mid-April to mid-May 1948. Their existence was a closely held secret within the Bureau, although according to a 1950 F.B.I. memorandum, "All the main lines, including Corcoran's unlisted phone at his office and the phone in his home, were being monitored." Only the agents actually listening in on Corcoran's calls, together with Hoover's topmost aides, knew about the tap. The Washington Field Office installed the tap but was not privy to information from it. One supervisor at the Bureau oversaw preparation of the transcripts each day. If he decided that something had been said of immediate interest to Hoover (invariably gossip, often inspired by Pearson's column that day), a transcript of that portion of the wiretap would be forwarded to the Director in less than twenty-four hours. When the full transcript became available, about three times a week, Hoover would personally sign a lengthy summary and send it by special messenger to the White House, along with the transcript.

Altogether, the Church committee found that the F.B.I. sent the White House more than 175 reports based on the telephone intercepts over the three-year period. The reports have a common thread: their tone is invariably conspiratorial, as Hoover underscores the us-versus-them attitude



*Corcoran's indirect involvement in the *Amerasia* espionage case also may have served as a pretext for the wiretapping. On March 11, 1945, agents from the Office of Strategic Services broke into the offices of *Amerasia*, a Far Eastern affairs magazine, and discovered thousands of pages of classified documents allegedly leaked by two government officials, Emmanuel Larsen and Andrew Roth. The investigation was turned over to the F.B.I., which, through wiretaps and break-ins, implicated another official, John S. Service. At the request of Ben Cohen, Corcoran advised Service and used his political influence to help him. (Service was never indicted, and because the O.S.S. and the F.B.I. had had no warrant for the break-ins, no one went to jail.) Wiretap transcripts from July 1945 record Corcoran and Cohen discussing the Service case. A February 3, 1964, memorandum in Corcoran's F.B.I. file mentions his role in the *Amerasia* case: "It is alleged that advice received from Corcoran was instrumental in having Service appear before a Grand Jury which resulted in a no bill being returned against him."

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that led to the surveillance in the first place.

The F.B.I.'s paper trail is contradictory on the issue of whether Attorney General Tom Clark knew about the tap, an important requirement for it to have been legal. No document specifically authorizing the wiretap has been found. All the Church committee located was a memorandum by Hoover dated November 15, 1945, five months after the surveillance was begun. In it the Director indicates that Clark "authorized the placing of a technical surveillance" on Corcoran because Truman "was particularly concerned" about Corcoran "and his associates." The President wanted "a very thorough investigation," Hoover wrote, so that "steps might be taken, if possible, to see that [Corcoran's] activities did not interfere with the proper administration of government." Hoover added that he had been asked to investigate Corcoran's activities and "see what, if any, of them might constitute a violation of law."

But a 1950 memorandum titled "CO Surveillance" and written by Assistant Director D. Milton Ladd, which was obtained under the F.O.I.A. by Professor Athan G. Theoharis, reveals that Hoover never explicitly told Attorney General Clark about the tap. The Attorney General occasionally received summaries of information gleaned from the wiretaps, but according to Ladd, "No correspondence was located in the files which would indicate that we at any time advised the Attorney General, either in writing or orally, of the existence of the CO Surveillance." Hoover gave Clark the following description of the source of the information summarized: "Due to the close relationship of the informant with Thomas Corcoran and his associates, the identity of the informant cannot be made known." Available documents do not indicate whether the Attorney General understood Hoover's message to mean Corcoran was being tapped; Ladd, however, wrote, "The Attorney General should have had every reason to believe that the technical surveillance was in existence."

Hoover and the Bureau were well aware that the tap was irregular and that the F.B.I. could be made the scapegoat should any of these extralegal favors become known publicly. In April 1948, after a year's hiatus, General Vaughan asked the F.B.I. for the tap to be reinstated. The reason for the action, according to a Bureau memorandum, was that "Corcoran was again becoming very active and [had] caused considerable embarrassment to the White House." Ladd recommended against complying with the request.

He explained that Truman's aides had "not made any specific allegations against Corcoran which would indicate a violation of Federal law over which we have investigative jurisdiction." But Hoover overruled his subordinate and agreed to reinstall the tap for one month to see if it would be "productive." The second tap yielded no more evidence of wrongdoing than the first one had.

Lacking such evidence, the F.B.I. was in a vulnerable position, and Hoover could not count on the White House to bail him out. In another memorandum obtained by Theoharis, also written in 1950, F.B.I. liaison to the White House Gordon Lease reported on a conversation he had had with General Vaughan: "If the [wiretap of Corcoran] ever became known it would be our baby. Vaughan would deny any knowledge." Two years after the tap ended, the Bureau was still worried about concocting a legal cover. The purpose of Ladd's 1950 memorandum was to furnish Hoover "with a history of the technical on Thomas B. Corcoran . . . and information on possible justification for the technical." He reviewed the wiretap summaries with the idea of "locating information therein or leads therefrom which would have justified placing the technical independent of authority furnished by Mr. McKim previously mentioned in this memorandum." But Ladd found no evidence of illegal activity by Corcoran in the summaries.

There is strong evidence that Truman personally approved the wiretap. Although McKim is not quoted as specifically invoking Truman's name when he made an oral request for the first tap in 1945, the fact that he, and later Vaughan, received the information gleaned from the wiretap is prima facie evidence that the President knew about it.

According to Ladd's memorandum, Truman issued a direct order discontinuing the tap in April 1947. The memorandum quotes Vaughan as saying, "The President had indicated the CO Surveillance should be discontinued." And as Professor Blum told us: "The fact that Vaughan was the recipient of the transcripts is strong circumstantial evidence that Truman knew about the tap. Vaughan was a shady, unreliable character, and he was awfully tight with Truman. He was as close to Truman as Bobby Baker was to Lyndon Johnson."

If Corcoran was engaged in any questionable dealing, he would not have talked about it on the telephone. In July 1945 and several times thereafter, he told his friends and associates over the phone, "Watch what you say; I'm being tapped." Tim Corcoran, who practices corporate law in his father's Washington firm, remembers him regularly taking a handful of nickels to a Connecticut Avenue drugstore to avoid using the home phone. "He even had code names for

Wiretap Policy and Practice in the 1940s

The Federal Communications Act of 1934 made it unlawful to "intercept and divulge" communications. But in 1940, with the rise of fascism, President Roosevelt issued a secret directive to Attorney General Robert Jackson that authorized him to place wiretaps on "persons suspected of subversive activities."

Jackson came up with a novel interpretation of the law: if the Attorney General authorized a tap and if the information from the tap was not divulged outside the government, it would be legal. That questionable interpretation would be relied on by Jackson's successors until the 1960s, when the Supreme Court ruled that warrantless wiretapping was forbidden by the Fourth Amendment. Subsequently Congress established judicial procedures for approving wiretaps requested by the Attorney General. —K.B./M.H.

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his friends, things like White Tiger and Black Tiger," he told us. Using pay phones became such a routine practice that Corcoran deducted the cost as a business expense on his income taxes. In 1951 he wrote a memorandum for his files to justify the $10 per diem he was asking for out-of-pocket expenses for taking cabs, buying drinks and using pay telephones. "Since I have to assume the risk that my telephones are tapped (as I know my files are periodically ransacked)," he wrote, "I do a considerable amount of telephoning over outside pay telephones on conversations which I want to make sure are not tapped."

If Corcoran and his associates knew about the tap, few people in the upper echelons of the White House at the time did. Clark Clifford, a special counsel under Truman and later Secretary of Defense in the Johnson Administration, said: "I learned in the White House that some things just weren't spoken about. You do well to keep your nose out of it. . . . This is one issue I can say I'm glad that I didn't know anything about."

Some New Deal lawyers who were picked up on the wiretap were stunned by its duration and breadth. Joseph Rauh, who went on to a career in labor and civil rights law, said he was flabbergasted: "Truman did this?" Other intimates of Corcoran, however, like Ernest Cuneo, expressed less surprise about Truman's involvement: "What got Truman's goat was that he thought we New Dealers looked down on him. And we did."

Shortly before Corcoran's death the Bureau released the more than 500 pages of documents he had requested under the Freedom of Information and Privacy acts. The documents contained much new information on the mechanics of the tap but not the transcripts themselves. The only extant copies of those were at the Truman Library, so Corcoran arranged to have the transcripts made accessible and planned a trip to Independence. He died before he could make that excursion and read of political battles won and lost almost forty years earlier.

The three-volume Church committee report unmasks the way in which the entire U.S. intelligence community—but chiefly the F.B.I.—abused the constitutional rights of citizens through telephone wiretaps, mail openings, burglaries and other clandestine acts. Six Presidents, from Roosevelt to Nixon, had condoned these abuses.

The Corcoran wiretap was a turning point; it set an informal precedent for the F.B.I. to get the White House to sanction political wiretapping. Hoover used Corcoran as a lure for Truman, and after thousands of pages of telephone transcripts had flowed to the White House, wiretapping became an acceptable tool of government. Certainly, J. Edgar Hoover, with his penchant for ingratiating himself with every new occupant of the White House, played the *agent provocateur*. But six Presidents proved susceptible to his blandishments, no matter how vocal their commitment to civil rights and liberties. The story of the wiretap is the story of how power corrupts in Washington. Otherwise, how could Tim Corcoran say, even facetiously, about the wiretap: "That's just the sort of thing my father would have done if he had been in office"? □

Alexander Cockburn on the PRESS.
Andrew Kopkind on the CULTURE WARS.
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Published on the eve of the first anniversary of the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007, this issue raises serious questions about the U.S. role in the tragedy. After a year of thorough research, author David Pearson concludes that U.S. authorities at the highest level knew the airliner was off course much earlier than they have admitted, and that the questions raised by the official versions of the story can only be resolved by a Congressional inquiry.

K.A.L. 007: Unanswered Questions
The August 17/24, 1985, issue brings our 1984 report up to date. With contributions by David Pearson, John Keppel and David Corn, it is the culmination of an intensive investigation. The authors analyze new Japanese radar data, discuss a Nation Institute–sponsored review, by aviation experts, of the final airline transmission and describe the government's efforts to obstruct investigation.

The Strange Correspondence of Morris Ernst & John Edgar Hoover, 1939–1964
Harrison E. Salisbury, the award-winning journalist, details how the director of the F.B.I. exploited and debased the confidence of a leading civil libertarian, and in so doing seriously compromised the A.C.L.U. Salisbury draws on some 300 exchanges to document the extent to which the machinations of the "top constable" profaned the democratic process.

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Frank Donner offers a provocative analysis and thorough documentation of the outrageous attempts by right wingers in media, Congress and the Administration to discredit the nuclear freeze movement, charging that it is inspired and manipulated by the Soviet Union.

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What do Russians think about the nuclear arms race? Two prominent Marxist dissidents, historian Roy A. Medvedev and biologist Zhores A. Medvedev, provide the unofficial viewpoint with a clarity rarely found in the American press.

Disarmament: Covering the Unthinkable
In this special issue Richard Pollak takes a critical look at the media coverage of the indisputably most important issue facing mankind; Michael Kazin gives a brief history of the birth of the freeze movement; and David Corn presents a useful directory of organizations working on the disarmament issue.

Fifteen Years of the Burger Court
Herman Schwartz and his cadre of twelve leading lawyers and scholars put together an invaluable assessment of the Burger Court. Leaving no stone unturned, the authors scrutinize the last fifteen years of "intense judicial activism" in a thought-provoking manner. No lawyer, student of the courts or concerned citizen should be without this issue.

Empire as a Way of Life
William Appleman Williams' brilliant analysis of America's life with an empire—and the implications of life without one—was the focus of this special issue that was distributed to the delegates at the 1980 Democratic National Convention.

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This special issue of *The Nation* is devoted to breaking the logomachy jam in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by subjecting the emotion-sodden rhetoric that weighs down current thinking to a blast of fresh ideas.

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Robert Engler reveals that the dangerous dependence on pesticides and the movement away from people-intensive agriculture results from corporate profit-making strategies. In addition, he shows that the Bhopal disaster is one of countless poisonings occurring each year, here and in the Third World, under an irresponsible scientific-corporate elite.

Beyond Westmoreland: The Right's Attack on the Press
How does the Westmoreland case fit into the New Right's strategy to curtail the independence of the press? Walter Schneir and Miriam Schneir answer this question and provide an overview of the New Right's campaign against the media.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Land of Our Mothers

SUSAN STRASSER

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LAND OF DOLLARS: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890–1925. *By Elizabeth Ewen. Monthly Review Press. 303 pp. $26. Paper $11.*

One of my immigrant grandmothers was deserted by her husband and died of tuberculosis in New York City, leaving two small children for her sister to raise in a household where live fish waited in the bathtub to be cooked and women stretched strudel dough over the kitchen table until they could read newspaper headlines through it. My other grandmother is still alive, watching television and shopping in supermarkets, knitting me scarves out of synthetic yarn, a witness to the twentieth century. She rarely talks about her past, priding herself on her modernity, on her presence in the life she lives now. I long ago decided not to press her into service as an oral-history subject, and always took her rejection of nostalgia as a survivor's wily response to jet travel, moon walks, long-distance telephone calls and reports from six grandchildren coming of age in the late 1960s.

Elizabeth Ewen's book brought me a new insight: my grandmother must have begun to form her attitudes toward newness and change as a small child. Daughters in New York immigrant families negotiated transitions between the old and the new every time they opened their apartment doors on their way to school or work. Like the young women in Ewen's book, my grandmother may have argued with her mother over the disposition of her paycheck, the morality of the dance hall or her right to choose her own husband. One way or another, she undoubtedly did argue over the underlying issue: her standing, her rights, in a world that she could claim to understand better, a culture that cared little for old-fashioned ways from the old country.

Susan Strasser is the author of Never Done: A History of American Housework *(Pantheon). She thanks Laura Schwartz for discussions of the immigration literature in person and in writing.*

Like kids growing up with computers, my grandmother's generation understood things their parents could not comprehend, though they did believe them to be important for participation in society as it was coming to be. Nearly everybody believed that society was coming to be something new and different; Progressive intellectuals and immigrant schoolchildren believed it was coming to be better. Campbell's soup and Wrigley's gum, Old Dutch cleanser and Camel cigarettes—a vast array of products newly available to all, including the working classes, provided material evidence of progress.

Elizabeth Ewen is the first historian I know of to write about immigration in the context of those changes, and about the development of mass culture in terms of groups generally considered to be outside it. Americanization was not simply a movement to adapt immigrants to a new land, she reminds us. All of America was Americanizing. The study of cultural adaptation and change that has structured immigration history must be integrated with recent work on the culture of consumption that was forming at the time of the great influx of workers from Southern and Eastern Europe.

This provides an important new way of thinking for a field that was getting stuck in an old argument. In 1951 Oscar Handlin published *The Uprooted*, whose title suggests its thesis, its Weberian underpinnings and its political and moral stance. Handlin characterized immigrants as male peasants transplanted in foreign soil, alone in the alienating mass culture of American cities, unable to rely on the support systems of traditional society, prone to poverty, violence and conflict. His approach suggested that immigration could be studied as an example of a worldwide modernization process, the confrontation between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. In theory, world-historical forces had it in for the immigrant and for his old way of life. In historical practice, some individuals and some cultures adapted more successfully than others, with successful adaptation defined as assimilation.

Revisionist historians, especially those who have incorporated the important insights of Herbert Gutman and of Joan Scott and Louise Tilly, have changed this picture considerably in recent years. They have rejected both the image of the lone immigrant man astray in the city and that of the melting pot. Immigrant culture persisted in and even influenced American life, they tell us. Preindustrial values, customs and family structure played an active role in a process not of cultural disintegration but of adaptation and reorientation. Women and the family occupy center stage in this kind of analysis because they have traditionally been identified as guardians of all those values and customs. If men were victims in the old version, women were even more so. The newer scholars treat as historical agents the very elements of the social system that their predecessors saw as dependent pawns of such forces as "industrialization" or "modernization."

At its best, the new history about immigrants moves away from this model of causation. It offers an anthropological stance toward the study of the past and adds a historical dynamism to the study of culture. In the hands of the unimaginative, however, the revisionist interpretation makes of "preindustrial culture" a new independent agent, little affected by the confrontation with American society. Ethnic and industrial society can seem like autonomous forces, duking it out in the realm of theory for their effect on the still-dependent lives of immigrants. Scholarship about immigrants, real people living real lives, demands a more complex understanding. Many scholars have begun to call for treatments that grapple with both sides of the story.

As any historian in the field must, Ewen has considered these issues, and her work offers insight into both the Americanization process and the power of Jewish and Italian cultures. But her dialectical approach touches more than the overarching theoretical questions. She confronts her reader with the necessity for dialectical thinking in many smaller but succinct insights. Concentrate on the contradictions, she says. American culture depended on separating classes in different parts of the city, at the same time creating a mass culture of public spaces. The native born, visiting the Lower East Side, smelled foreign smells and heard foreign tongues; to the greenhorn, the neighborhood embodied America.

This rich approach offers a sense of

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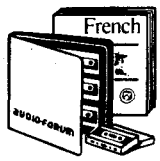

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the tremendous complexity of historical change, of its resistance to tidy theories of causation. Ewen treats the old variables—immigrant culture, American culture, modernization—as slippery subjects, resistant to simplistic characterizations. Above all, she demands that we understand their dynamism. Nothing stood still in the "land of the dollar," least of all America itself.

Ewen presents her interpretations in the light of what she calls a "montage" of varied sources—fiction, oral history, autobiography and the writings of the social workers, mostly women, who lived and worked on the Lower East Side. She has gone far beyond the traditional view of these middle- and upper-class women as well-meaning but essentially self-interested and self-serving. Her use of their writings suggests the importance of Americanization as a movement to which the powerful in government and the corporations devoted considerable resources. Yet the selfless work of a significant few among the social workers, and the intimate knowledge they gained as neighborhood residents, appear here as essential features of neighborhood life.

Some scholars may criticize the highly personal cast of this book, beginning with the introductory reminiscences of the author's own grandmothers and carried through in her treatment of the oral histories and novels. As historical sources, these raise methodological problems that Ewen does not always confront. They do help make a highly readable book: *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars* is full of characters and stories and the sights and smells of the Lower East Side.

Moreover, Ewen's approach raises issues that were fundamental to the emotional lives of immigrant women and to the nature of the cultures that clashed at their thresholds. Only an approach that honors the personal can effectively examine mothers and daughters struggling over the "right to a personality," for example. This is, of course, a familiar and fundamental mother-daughter conflict. At the same time, Ewen explains, it was a particular feature of the dispute between traditional community values and the newly developing ethos of consumption, which preached the construction of personality through activities and possessions.

Those activities and possessions were the best things America had to offer. Ewen records immigrant women's

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dismay on arriving in a neighborhood without sunshine and fresh air. They found compensations in technology: a sewing machine (though it took eighteen years to pay it off) or the miracle of running water. They had no place to grow food, no place to dry tomatoes or store root vegetables. Everything cost money. "You have to pay for every potato, every grain of barley," one woman noted. But here they ate sugar and drank coffee, like European lords.

They were not lords, of course. Ewen takes her title and an epigraph from W.E.B. DuBois: "To be a poor race is hard, but to be a poor race in the land of dollars is the very bottom of hardship." Jews and Italians shared that hardship with blacks, with other immigrants and with each other. While she points out the differences between Italian rural peasantry and the market and artisan culture of the *shtetl*, her examination of the immigrant in the context of developing consumer culture makes an effective case for women who shared the same streets to be sharing the same history book.

Ewen has painted the broad outlines of a significant new picture. Some elements remain vague: she describes religion in the old country, for example, but neglects the church and the synagogue, the kosher home and the neighborhood saint's day parade in New York City. Scholars will want to pursue her analytic insights in studies that develop them in rigorous detail. Those insights stand as a challenge to immigration history, and they come in a book as teeming with life as the neighborhood that is its subject. □

Combat Zones

MICHAEL STEPHENS

THE MONKEY WARS: Poems by Bruce Weigl. *University of Georgia Press. 47 pp. $10.95. Paper $6.95.*

One has to go back to the poetry of James Wright to find a writer who has used the fallen industrial landscape of the Midwest as effectively as Bruce Weigl, or to that of Frost for one who has used narrative so prominently. These are lofty comparisons, but *The Monkey Wars* is equal to them. When Weigl's dramas are not revealing a mythical and violent Midwest, they unveil a disruptive, war-gutted Vietnamese landscape in a way I can recall no other writer doing. Sometimes these worlds collide, spiraling, as in "Snowy Egret" and "Song of Napalm."

Weigl writes about ordinary people who find themselves, as the result of irreversible choices, in extraordinary situations. His medium of address is a hard-edged, pared-down lyricism, a passionate open verse. His poems often read like short short stories or miniature dramas, and their effect is startling. The "plots" customarily spin off from dramatic reversals, for instance in "Killing Chickens," in which a grandfather kills a chicken and, using its severed head for a puppet, pecks his grandson. The narrator says, "He did it so I would remember him."

"Noise" and "For the Wife Beater's Wife" arc out in similar fashion, and this quality of transformation and complication is best demonstrated in "Hope," in which a factory worker named Joe "drinks too much and hates/Anybody who is not white." Part of the genius of these stories is the way Weigl gets us to sympathize with characters like Joe.

The dramatic characteristics of this writing work best in Weigl's poems about Vietnam. Some turn tragic settings into epiphanies ("Girl at the Chu Lai Laundry"); others render a fallen, battered world in a literal way ("Burning Shit at An Khe"). The best of them begin in nearly pastoral elegance and work into concussive illuminations. "Temple near Quang Tri, Not on the Map" commences with "ivy thick with sparrows" and culminates with a squad of American soldiers coming upon an old man muttering to himself in a small jungle temple:

> His face becomes visible, his eyes
> Roll down to the charge
> Wired between his teeth and the floor.

The poem ends with an eerie implosion and returns to the pastoral when "sparrows/Burst off the walls into the jungle."

"Surrounding Blues on the Way Down" is a companion poem to the one

Michael Stephens's first novel, Season at Coole, *was recently reissued by The Dalkey Archive in Chicago.*

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about Quang Tri, and it shows us how cause and effect operate in a combat zone. Two American soldiers in a jeep pass an old Vietnamese woman whose only flaw is to have "smiled her beetle black teeth at us." The narrator sits as a tragic witness while the driver brakes the jeep, spins the wheels in reverse, jumps out and slams the old woman to her knees, "The plastic butt of his M-16/Crashing down on her."

These violent moments are not gratuitous. They are used to unmask and to articulate our troubled emotions. That Weigl accomplishes these resolutions of action in poem after poem is remarkable. But his tensions are everywhere in *The Monkey Wars*, line to line, word to word, line break to line beginning. His war poems are some of the finest in our language. In combination with the dramatic miniatures from the Midwest, they amount to a work of extraordinary achievement. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

The Sculptures of George Sugarman

"Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing" is the title of one of Kierkegaard's *Edifying Discourses*. It would have pleased this witty, driven man to know that a natural rhyme in English would yield an artistic imperative close to the homiletic one of his sermon. He would doubtless have interpreted "Purity of Art Is to Will One Thing" as a celebration of the single-minded artist who labors to no ulterior and distracting purpose, as in the case of the needlewoman with whom he begins his discourse, who makes an altar cloth as a form of prayer. But I have in mind instead the artwork as the locus of severe purgations undertaken to reveal the pure essence of art. The history of modernism may be read as a linked sequence of spiritual exercises, undertaken in compliance with what the Apostle James repudiated as "double-mindedness." The subtraction of subject matter is only the most obvious reduction, but even Kandinsky, who discovered abstract art, also wrote a treatise on art and spirituality. Some deep historical explanation is necessary to understand why the studio should have replaced the monastic cell for the practice of austerities, and why art and asceticism should be so closely linked in our century.

Kandinsky did not go far enough, the single-minded would murmur. He retained pictorial space, leaving room for illusion and hence the danger that art should be damned to the status of appearance. Painting must be identified with surface; flatness is the saving virtue, everything else is excrescence, is corruption, no matter how long it has been associated with art. The rejection of any save primary colors, as in the work of Mondrian, leads to a further elimination in favor of pure white or pure black, or better still the blank, textureless, hence textless, panel. The rejection of diagonal, not to speak of curved, lines makes room for the erasure of lines altogether and finally for the erasure of forms, since forms bear the stigma of boundaries, and so on until one has arrived at pure stains and washes, and finally, once more, the untouched canvas dense with the history of its resistances. It would be difficult to comprehend the undertaking of this renunciatory itinerary but for the promise that less is more, and its corollary assurance that the least must be the most. Minimalism, as the logical destiny of the enterprise, would look pretty arid but for this transfigurative formula.

Construed as an agenda of progressive divestiture, modernism petered out sometime in the early 1970s. Its demise accounts in part for the fuddled state of art criticism since that time, for with each purification, a platform was established for criticism of everything else on grounds of esthetic bulemia. These platforms collapsed in the general spirit of permissiveness or pluralism that seems to follow, as a matter of historical necessity, periods of puritan sublimity. It is still all right to be a minimalist, but on grounds more of preference than duty: the art world has its Jack Sprats, but it also has its Ms. Sprats, who, like Joseph Beuys, see no harm in fat. Purity today remains only as a nostalgic concept. Those who have attained their majority in the present period of artistic tolerance would have great difficulty imagining what life was like in the times when one resisted this or that injunction with that sense of defiance with which Kierkegaard's father roared blasphemies while striding the Danish marches. It was a challenge to the universe.

The sculptor George Sugarman likes to say that there are no longer any dirty

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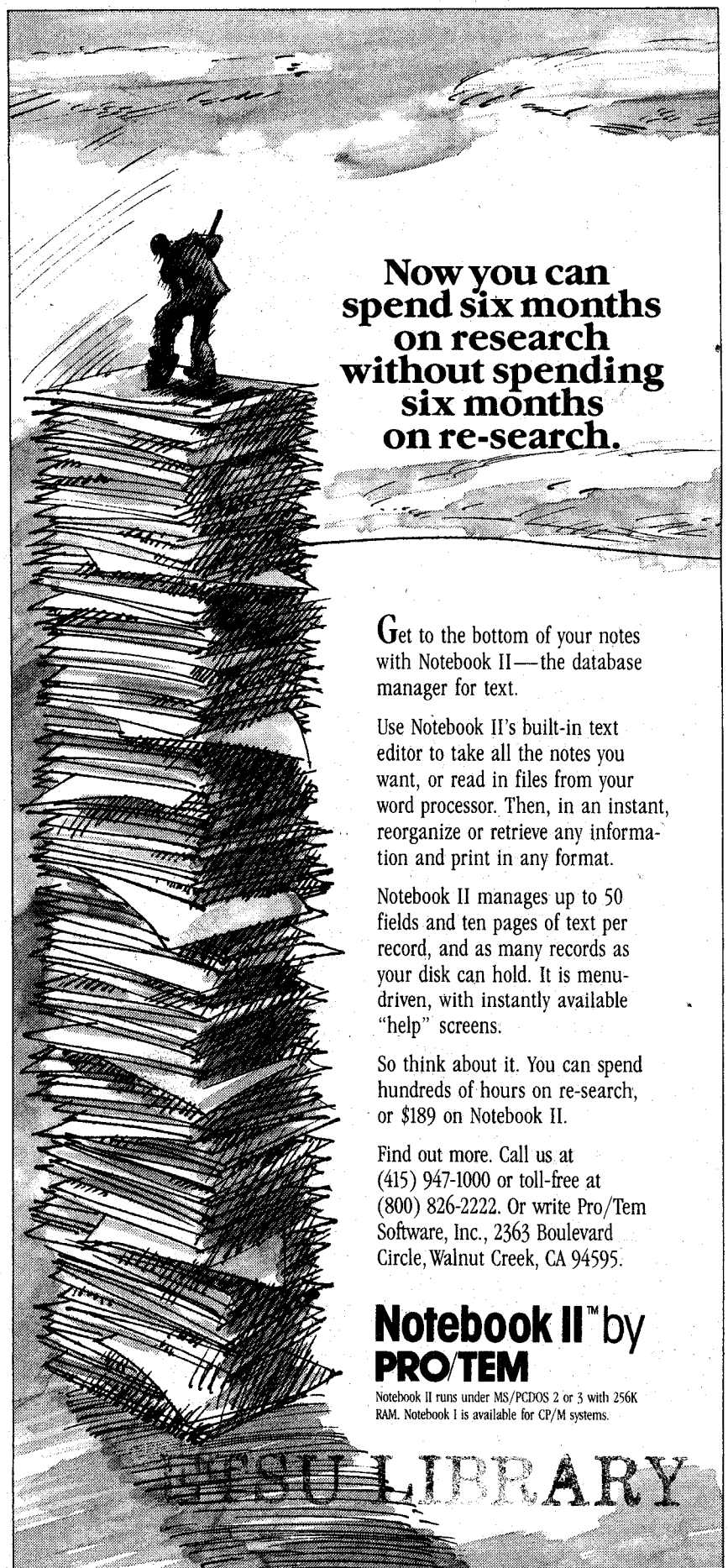
words, which means, I suppose, that the possibility of impurity has vanished with the possibility of purity, leaving a normatively unstructured space in which a term like "baroque," once an epithet, is now merely descriptive. His sculptures in wood, on view in the Lobby Gallery of the Whitney Museum of American Art until February 9, were executed in a period—from 1961 to 1965—during which they must have deserved most of the dirty words that composed the critical vocabulary of the era. Consider, for example, the injunction to respect the integrity of materials—the woodiness of wood, the stoniness of stone. This defines the instant limits on sculptural intervention, and condemns as trespass any manipulation of materials deemed disrespectful of its natural properties. When Jasper Johns painted bronze to look like the familiar stamped tin out of which cans of Savarin coffee were fabricated, he was violating a commandment that went back perhaps to Winckelman. Part of what made his *Savarin Can* of 1960 so intoxicating was its naughty disregard of the purism of materials. For Sugarman, sculpture as such was an unnatural use of natural materials: "The natural capacity of wood," he said, remembering his Aristotle, "is to be a tree." So if we are to give it a shape that deflects it from its own natural fulfillment, why stop there? "It is," he said, "just another substance for making sculpture."

There are a dozen works on display, and as a group they violate, one might say systematically, most of the esthetic prohibitions thought to be essential to sculpture in the early 1960s. I do not suppose they were made specifically to breach a commandment, as demonstrations that one can—imagine!—indulge in polychromy without the heavens opening. Rather, I believe, Sugarman saw the prohibitions as impeding the realization of his sculptural concepts, and I shall explain how polychromy is a response, in his case, to problems that evolved in the natural course of his work. The typical piece, in any case, is a concatenation of wooden elements, each a kind of crazy form, painted in the bright enamel colors of the toyshop—the colors of wooden soldiers, rocking horses, tops, jumping jacks, blocks, roly-polys or jacks-in-the box—and patterned like objects required to be insistently visible in order to be instantly differentiated, like fishermen's floats, signal flags, the costumes of jockeys,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the blazons of jousting knights. They are a world away from the rust or leaden tonalities of severely minimal forms so appealing to a different sculptural temperament. "Less is less," he wrote in 1968, contradicting Mies's paradox with a tautology, though not quite willing to endorse the complementary tautology, "More is more." More just "has a chance of being more."

Visitors to the exhibition may wonder whether in his case more really is more, but perhaps that will be only because they have brought with them proscriptions mastered in art appreciation courses, which render them unprepared for the merry impetuosity with which Sugarman spills one set of misfit forms across the floor, or gathers up another set to compound some integral assemblage. In a way, the pieces look like a prodigal child's putting together of the elements of a magnificently eccentric Lego set. It is this sense—that the integral pieces could be taken apart and put back in the box, to be taken out and played with on another occasion—that perhaps gives the impression of not being quite the "more" we have in mind when less is said to be more. Whatever meaning there is, of course, it is clearly not the meaning borne by archaic torsos of Apollo or Pietàs or dying Gauls or horny saints pierced by arrows. The meanings seem more the kind borne by gaudy figureheads, by cigar-store Indians or Uncle Sams, or wooden Punches. It comes as no surprise, for example, that Sugarman should on occasion make actual toys: there was a flower on wheels by him at the Vanderwoude Tananbaum Gallery which you could have given (for fifteen grand) to the child who has everything last Christmas. It would be hard to picture a toy by Richard Serra, unless in a nursery by Charles Addams. But Picasso made marvelous toys, infused with the same spirit that went into *Guernica*, and Matisse's decoupages were masterpieces that arose from the same impulses as paper dolls. So be sure, before dismissing them from consideration, that you are not demanding purity of heart at the cost of an alternative sculptural virtue.

C-Change, of 1965, is a good piece for thinking through Sugarman's enterprise. Its thematic element is the letter C, and the work consists of C's adventures in seeking to escape its basic geometry. It is a vertically oriented work, so begin with the base, an elongated pyramid resting on two flat squares, which changes its mind before attaining its apex by widening out to support the first C. This is a nice, thick, squarish C, like a shoe for a cubist horse, painted orange. Atop it is a bright raspberry C, fat and round, as C's should be, tipped at an angle. Then comes a swollen white C with thickened extremities, expressing an ambition to assume the shape of a lyre. The next C closes its lips, rather too fiercely, and looks like a claw from a yellow lobster—or a C-clamp. Cantilevered out is a complex form, painted black, which could be two C's, or one C with a shadow, or a single C split in two.

Let me pause at this point to discuss the matter of color. This doubled, or angled, C is clearly meant to be read as a single element with a complex anatomy, as the single color indicates, rather than as two adjoined elements, like the bottom two C's. And there would be no way of understanding this

THE BLINDED RING-TAIL

It was 1958 or 9, and I
Was walking home along
An old gravel footpath
That cut through the woods
Behind an animal hospital
And past an open, fenced
Area where, on that day,
A ring-tailed eagle, his
Wing feathers cropped
And one black claw tethered
To a spike in the ground,

Was perched inside a hoop
Wound round with patches
Of carpet-backing:
From a distance it looked
Almost like a coin grown
Huge and lusterless as if
Filtered through a lens;
But a snow had just fallen
The night before, and the sun
Had not risen above the tops
Of the trees, and everything

At that hour—woods and gravel,
Fenceposts and snow-scrim—
Everything seemed as if caught
Under glass, aswarm in a light
Sieving the landscape with
Its watery dredge. It was like
What I'd imagined that dying
Must be, some gradual disturbance
Of the surface of things
That would little by little
Seem less what they are

Until finally one day all
Unlikenesses blurred
Into a likeness so dazzling
We couldn't help disappear.
So who could've blamed me
When I climbed up over
The barbed wire fence and
Stood motionless in the yard,
Or when I clapped my hands
Like rifle shot, just once,
And the eagle in profile
Opened his eye: the clear
Domed-cataract glazed flat-
Iron gray dilating to slate,
Then opal, then glass,
Like the only transparence
I could look through to see
Into the heart of that hour,
Its hidden, indelible, en-
Closing dream. Brought eye
To eye I looked a long
Time before, like a boy,

I moved closer still:
My first step crackling
In the icy yard, the eagle's
Shoulders rose to a pitch
And squared on the sound,
Then setting his eyes
On some shadow in the brain
And slowly upgathering
His own weight lightly,
He lunged against
The air, against the dumb-

Struck shadow that split
In two as if doubled
In mirror, jerking him head-
Long onto the bauchy ground.
I fell back as if I'd been
Knocked down and could not
Break into breath, and stared,
Wide-eyed through a glaze
Of tears, while over and over
The eagle tried to right
Itself, tangled in the tether

And dragging backwards
Into the undershadow
Of the feeding stand—
And there, even now,
More than twenty years
Later, I can feel it again,
That blind eye flare
And fix me with its dream,
The stunned heart throbbing
Across the prismatic frenzy
Of the daylight between us.

Sherod Santos

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difference were it not made plain by the differentiating use of color. So colors here are punctuational, marking the boundaries between forms. When dealing with familiar or natural forms, like flowers or human or animal bodies, we have independent, real-world knowledge as to which the parts are and where the joints are: legs, petals, heads, stems, necks, leaves, arms. A sculpture of such an object, therefore, can either dispense with color or use it more or less descriptively: a sculptor who painted arms a different color from trunks would be making a witty observation on the philosophy of parts and wholes, a kind of color-coded demonstration model for extraterrestrial tourists. But Sugarman's forms have, as a general rule, only a distant resemblance to natural or familiar forms; he is an abstract artist (though not a nonreferential artist). So novel are his forms that it is a serious question as to whether we have come to a new form or simply an unexpected part of an old form. And color helps us decide that. These observations, needless to say, explain the use of color without explaining the choice of color. Color itself becomes descriptive when form becomes referential: the green of a form that refers to a tree helps fix the reference of the form, allowing the sculptor great freedom. But that leaves open the choice of *which* green to use, and at that point color becomes expressive rather than merely referential. Since the letter C has no natural color, the colors of Sugarman's antic C's describe a mood or feeling. And the choice of lollipop colors pretty much singles out a sector of relevant feeling: there is no hermeneutic license for connecting *C-Change* to something terrible or tragic.

Arising from the black form is a blue form so thick and angular that only the pressure of its peers enables us to recognize it as a wayward C. And poised at the very edge of this anomalous C is a rebellious form which almost closes the gap essential to C-hood, to become a triangle. It is the color of limes. And balanced on its upper leg is the largest C form of all, triumphant in its identity. It spreads its coral arms as a singer who has reached, well, high C. It is a very funny work, reversing the title of Wallace Stevens's poem so that it becomes "The Letter C as Comedian." It is, as its title requires, something rich and strange, a zigzag harlequinade of silly C's evolving up to some kind of vertical climax 114 inches above the floor. It is impossible not to smile each time one reads it.

Inscape, of 1964, is a horizontal aglomeration of heterogeneous forms spread out at the entrance to the Whitney's restaurant. A white serpentine form wiggles, like the Loch Ness monster, alongside a crinkled expanse of green wood, which, if it is a stream, flows into a four-armed trough, which sluices it into a peach-colored lozenge, which may be a pool. This identification is made difficult by a stack of wooden slices laid on its side, which then connects with a slinky S—which may be the monster's svelte companion—which either touches or turns into a sort of chain, which forms a bridge over what might be a glacier if the forms between it and the serpentine have a geological identity: mountains or boulders, or perhaps huts, painted blue and eggplant and the color of yolk. It has the air of a miniature golf course. Or it could be the model for a marvelous playland of bright, kind forms to climb over or crawl under or creep through or slide down. On either scale, as sculpture or environment, it radiates a generosity of invention and objectifies a certain innocent glee.

In view of these essentially benign connotations, it is a dark tribute to the paranoia of our time that Sugarman's work should have become associated with the terrors of the contemporary world. Sugarman approaches the public space from the Samaritan perspective with which people bring toys to very sick children. Since the spaces he is commissioned to enhance are terminally bleak, why not fill them with shapes that refer to the green world of waterfalls and bowers, of sweet streams and cool forests, where office workers and bureaucrats can enjoy the privileges of nymphs and shepherds as they spoon yogurt or listen to headsets on their lunch breaks? In 1975 he set about constructing, in a plaza in Baltimore that makes Red Square look like the Parc Monceau, a sort of arbor of leafy forms, under the auspices of the General Services Administration Program for Public Art. The chief judge of

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the United States District Court in Maryland moved to quash the project, saying it afforded shelter to muggers and molesters, "persons bent on mischief or assault on the public." It was even argued that it would convert to instant shrapnel were a terrorist's bomb detonated within its dangerous space. The political and legal ordeals the work had to undergo from maquette to monument give it a heroic dimension somewhat at odds with its pastoral intentions, to become a lesson in the politics of purity of heart.

A show of Sugarman's later style, of thin washes of sheet metal given a certain rococo lightness and flamboyant energy, will have closed at the Robert Miller Gallery by now, but two good examples of it can be seen, one on 60th Street and Fifth Avenue, the other on Third Avenue near 53rd. I like the wooden work at the Whitney best. What strikes me is how difficult it would be to be untrue to the essence of wood after all. Cut it up into screwy shapes, paint it up in any color you choose, the woodiness of wood is irrepressible. In the end I was reminded of the great sixteenth-century limewood sculptors of Germany, who celebrated wood by shaping it into elaborate drapery, into intricate weavings and plaitings, plant-forms and animal-forms of astonishing realism, the convulsings of martyred flesh, the liquefactions of blood and tears. There is a message here regarding the moral metaphysics of matter, which I leave to the reader to draw as an exercise. □

MUSIC.

EVAN EISENBERG

Khovanshchina

The knot of consonants in the word *Khovanshchina* gives some idea of the moral knottiness of the opera. It's our good luck that it turned out so knotty; it might have been cut and dried. Mussorgsky and his collaborator, the critic and archeologist V.V. Stassov, wanted to show the origins of certain species dominant in the Russia of their day: the Westernizer, the Slavophile, the Prophet, the Autocrat, the Informer, the Prodigal Son, the People. To do this, they excavated the period just before the rise to power of Peter the Great, the founder of the modern Russian state. What they found in the seventeenth-century chronicles was a mess, naturally, which they tried to make manageable by conflating characters and compressing events. In other hands, the result could have been a specimen box.

But Mussorgsky, bless him, was not big on neatness. His Westernizer, Prince Galitsyn, chief minister to the mind and body of the Czarevna and regent Sophia, is the cultivated tenor we expect, singing in smooth-shaven curves; he is clever, cautious, diplomatic. But he is also prone to a Slavic moodiness bordering on hysteria. On the sly, he gets his fortune read in a bowl of water. When it doesn't agree with him, he wants the soothsayer drowned in the marshes. And he is in league with the opera's Slavophile, Ivan Khovansky, the boyar whose vodka-sodden irregulars, the Streltsi, or musketeers, have bloodily brought Sophia to power. Khovansky is a dark, declamatory bass, always rooted in the soil of the key he is singing in. He is brutal, horny, crazy for power and praise. He is also intelligent, with a ready eye for irony. He even has compassion, of a sort, for his people. He is the kind of butcher the lambs want to kiss. When he asks in measured tones, "Tak li?"—"Is it not so, children?" the People respond in frightening open chords with a frantic, lock-step, sixteenth-note accompaniment: "Tak, tak,"—"Yes, yes, your Highness!" The People are the river the characters swim in, a volatile medium in which the slightest shock makes waves of stunning choral music.

The Informer is the bureaucrat Shaklovity, who secretly denounces Khovansky to Sophia and her half-brother Peter (whereupon Peter is inspired to coin the word *Khovanshchina*, meaning something between "Khovanskyism" and "the Khovansky affair") and then physically stabs him in the back. An arrogant baritone no one seems to like, Shaklovity is also a patriot. Alone onstage, he prays with cantorial fervor for the coming of a Russian savior, preferably an Autocrat. The Prophet is Dosifei, leader of the Old Believers, who fought to save the ancient ritual of the Russian church from the reforms of the Patriarch Nikon. As one would expect, Dosifei is a bass with a rolling, fatherly tone, capable of calming the people or setting them afire—literally, if need be. But only if need be. Before leading his flock to martyrdom, he tries his best to play politics. And in the heat

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of political talk he's human enough to call his ally Khovansky a windbag.

Actually, the idea of self-immolation comes not from Dosifei but from Marfa, the young seer of the Old Believers who reads Galitsyn's fortune in the water bowl. The idea comes to her—Mussorgsky is explicit about this—as a way of getting even with her boyfriend. She is in love with Khovansky's son Andrei, a spoiled and vicious brat (the Prodigal Son) who, having had his way with her, is now in love with a chaste German girl named Emma. Andrei calls Marfa a witch and tries to kill her. She keeps singing about his flaming kisses and the flames that will redeem their love. In the end, she does manage to include him in the Old Believers' pyre, where he dies crying the name Emma.

Briefly described, Marfa sounds psychotic, but her music is radiant. Mussorgsky was proud of his success in "making this Russian woman *pure*." Although he disliked Wagner, his Marfa is a kind of borsch-fed Isolde or Brünnhilde—capable, unlike them, of nasty wisecracks and of muttering to herself, after a stream of pieties, that she's "talking like a book."

The performance of Helga Dernesch as Marfa in the Metropolitan Opera's recent production of *Khovanshchina* (its only other production ran for four nights in 1950) has been much praised. She did make a gorgeous mezzo-soprano sound, but to my ears it was the same sound over and over: a moist, pleading, heart-on-sleeve sound exactly suited to one-fifth of the words she had to sing. (Her two set pieces, the folk song "Very Young I Wandered" and the reading of Galitsyn's water bowl, were fine, though, and would have been even finer if the solo winds had listened to her instead of counting time.) This Marfa was wonderfully digestible, but for a taste of the real buckwheat Marfa it is necessary to hear Irina Arkhipova on the Bolshoi Opera recording that used to be on Melodiya/Angel and may now be found, with luck, on the Le Chant du Monde label distributed by Harmonia Mundi. With her glorious multicolored voice Arkhipova is able to accuse, seduce, mock, plead or prophesy at an eighth-note's notice. In the last scene, leading Andrei to a love-death he would rather sit out, she mingles ardor and contempt; and singing a madly modulating line that translates, "I shall embrace you in my arms for the last time: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" she manages not to sound laughable.

The Bolshoi set (like the single recording in the U.S. catalogue, a good lean performance by the Sofia National Opera on Monitor) uses Rimsky-Korsakov's version of the opera; the Met, to its credit, uses Shostakovich's more faithful realization of the unfinished piano score. I feel guilty when I listen to Rimsky's rewrite of *Boris Godunov*, an opera Mussorgsky himself had already completed (twice) and orchestrated. In the case of *Khovanshchina*, though, the dirty job had to be done—even if Rimsky, with his taste for blackboard harmonies and Dayglo colors, was not the man to do it. Anyway, Rimsky's version is the only one on record, which is unfortunate but should not stop us from hearing the opera in some form. Certainly it should not stop us from hearing a Marfa as alive as Arkhipova's, a Marfa that Mussorgsky would have recognized in the street and hugged.

Alive is a good word for the Bolshoi performance as a whole, with its blustery, weathered basses, high-strung tenors, console-radio sound effects, and the emphatic paw of Boris Khalkin moving everything along. The singing is nothing if not idiomatic (even when it shouldn't be, as when the German Emma is played by the cast's most garglingly Slavic soprano). If slides or snarls sometimes hide the melody, the many nasal and pharyngeal sounds make it clearer by showing its basis in Russian speech.

The Metropolitan cast was more marksmanlike in hitting the notes, pleasanter in tone and on the whole more subdued in characterization. I hardly noticed the conducting of Neeme Järvi, which leads me to think it was just about right. The production by August Everding was commonplace, with bad lighting by Gil Wechsler and sets by Ming Cho Lee that might have been borrowed from another company's *Boris* (except for the fine dolly-shot effect achieved by the rotating set in the last scene, matching the relentless music of Marfa and Andrei's walk to the pyre). But the cast had, in Wieslaw Ochman, a Galitsyn as good as the Bolshoi's fine Alexei Maslennikov, and in Aage Haugland an overwhelming Khovansky—overwhelming, among other things, the Dosifei of Martti Talvela, when according to Stassov's intention it should have been the other way around. (Dosifei was the role the great bass Chaliapin chose.) Haugland had to work through some hoarseness the night I

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heard him, but his vocal and physical acting could not have been better. A key to the role is the parlando phrase *spasi bokh*, "God help us," which is on Khovansky's lips no matter what the dramatic situation. Haugland varied it, but usually gave it a deep downward twist that said, "Has everyone gone stark raving mad?"

Haugland was a marvel in the scene where Khovansky, at home and awaiting disaster, is dining, and his servant girls sing a mournful song, and he says, "Life isn't much fun in Russia nowadays, and now, if you please, I have to put up with moaning women, and tears and gnashing of teeth in incredible amounts! God help us!" Before this outburst Haugland cradled his head in his hands, shaking it; after, he pounded on the table to get the maidens' tempo moving. The scene brings to mind Don Giovanni's last banquet, except that this Don has never believed in his own freedom. You might say he is half statue himself. Behind his recklessness, he has a deep sense of limitation; no wonder his characteristic cadence reaches high on the accent, then comes down to earth.

The one character in the opera who *does* believe in his freedom is Andrei. True, his idea of freedom is the freedom to chase a new skirt; but we can sympathize with his squirming in the uncannily powerful arms of Marfa, and we are moved when he sings, in the last scene, this song, with its aching repeated fifths:

> Where are you, my dear freedom?
> Where are you, my tender freedom?
> With my dear father?
> With my tender mother?

The answer must lie, somehow, in the relation of the sexes, which in *Khovanshchina* is so unsettled. Nearly all the folk songs in the opera are about meetings of male and female—young lovers, old gossips, even swans—and all of them get interrupted. In the opera's action, too, love is derailed. But one relation is clear: the female principle that is Marfa overpowers all the men and binds them to their fate. She is the earth they walk on, the earth that gave them birth and will take them back. And she is Mother Russia, whose prodigal sons can never quite escape her (even Horowitz can resist only so long).

By rights this ought to be a pretty depressing opera. There is no major character (with the exception of Shaklovity, who, history tells us, will get his later, and Peter, who has the good sense to stay out of the opera) for whom anything goes right. None of the species current in Mussorgsky's Russia are given a flattering genealogy. Yet we can say of *Khovanshchina* what Mussorgsky, in a letter to Stassov, said of *The Origin of Species*, a book that inspired him to search out "the subtlest traits in the nature of man":

> Teaching people about their origins, Darwin knows what kind of animals he is dealing with (to think that he wouldn't know!); therefore, by the most imperceptible of means, one is *gripped in a vise*, and such is the power of the genius of this colossus, that not only does this violence not strip one of his pride, but sitting in Darwin's vise is pleasant to the point of bliss.

Conceived as a national epic, *Khovanshchina* is more Russian in its concerns than *Boris*, which helps explain why the one masterpiece has been welcome in the West while the other has not. It is an opera that ought to be heard in Foggy Bottom, for the species it anatomizes still play a part in Russian life. It raises many questions. Is the Informer, the apparatchik, still a patriot, or has he degenerated into a pair of ears and a belly? Is there any hope for the Westernizer, or must he always end up in exile—external, internal or internalized? Can the cuddly and magnificent aspects of the Slavophile be separated from his need to break heads? Is the Autocrat the only alternative to chaos? Are the Prophets all in Vermont or camping in the basements of foreign embassies, or have some found their way into the stonework of Communist life? Is there still, in some quarters, a readiness to immolate oneself, as well as others who may be less willing?

This kind of exercise needs great care; just imagine Arbatov and his colleagues pulling conclusions about America from *Porgy and Bess* ("Sporting Life represents Wall Street, which awaits the outcome of every conflict and, like some big buzzard, takes the profit, symbolized by Bess"). We must take the myths as knots to untangle, not monsters to scare ourselves with. And we must remember that one culture's tangle is another's unit of meaning. In Russian, *shch* is one letter. □

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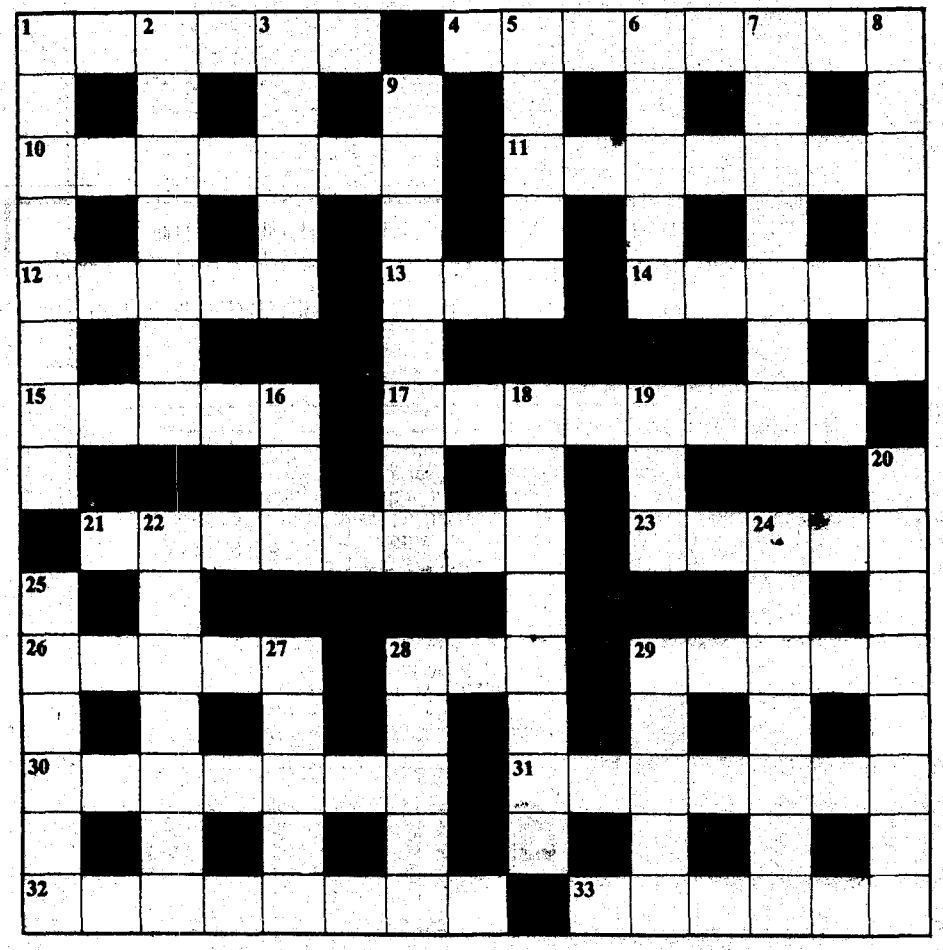
Crossword Puzzle No. 2089

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 A great leader, not quite half Communist. (6)
4 and 21 Pique Dame, as the French say, of opera. (3,5,2,6)
10 Pulls up with what happens when you leave the windows open, one hears. (5,2)
11 An unusual rain with what might go around in Japan and in Africa. (7)
12 In a short month and a short day it might be cut! (5)
13 and 19 down Possesses "X" speed. (6)
14 Many a criminal was experimented with, obviously. (5)
15 Such a literary man was 1 across? Negative—certainly! (5)
17 Rub the wrong way, and irritate, thereby causing an explosion. (8)
21 See 4
23 Does such a prize suggest the reason the ring wasn't made? (5)
26 Where some people find food, according to an early ruler. (5)
28 Bill's companion would be one, but two would be crazy! (3)
29 Like a forest deity, cap in or out of hand. (5)
30 This bird is able to carry a sort of pile ahead of it. (The bill for one might be big.) (7)
31 Possibly is bored in take-off as one does it. (7)
32 Certainly shouldn't be part of a nightmare, with Mary dead this way! (8)
33 One is known as being ancient and loyal but seems to spout a lot. (6)

DOWN

1 The plant is somewhat severe, with nothing going on in any circumstances. (8)
2 A good distance, as they say, but one hopes to be on it after a drive. (7)
3 A seed burst open and put in very gently. (5)
5 Commonly such as Henry, with a good deal of hair. (5)
6 One might be crazy to stop around the capital of Louisiana! (5)
7 Cupid has one on, but has to be wearing something! (7)
8 Diana's sort might be found in ancient lakes and rivers, etc. (6)
9 See 25
16 A conciliatory bribe is the usual practice, obviously. (3)
18 Answers legal things over the waters. (8)
20 It's perfectly plain one hears it with relief! (3,5)
22 Every high school probably has such ability. (7)
24 Twice as good to Henri, with the point being missed if you can't eat sweets, perhaps. (7)
25 and 9 Took little bites in one of those things you need to taste? It's not allowed to get started! (6,2,3,3)
27 More fine, if you want to make a distinction. (5)
28 Plant manufacturing tin, located over North America. (5)
29 Possibly poses as an important part of many Westerns. (5)

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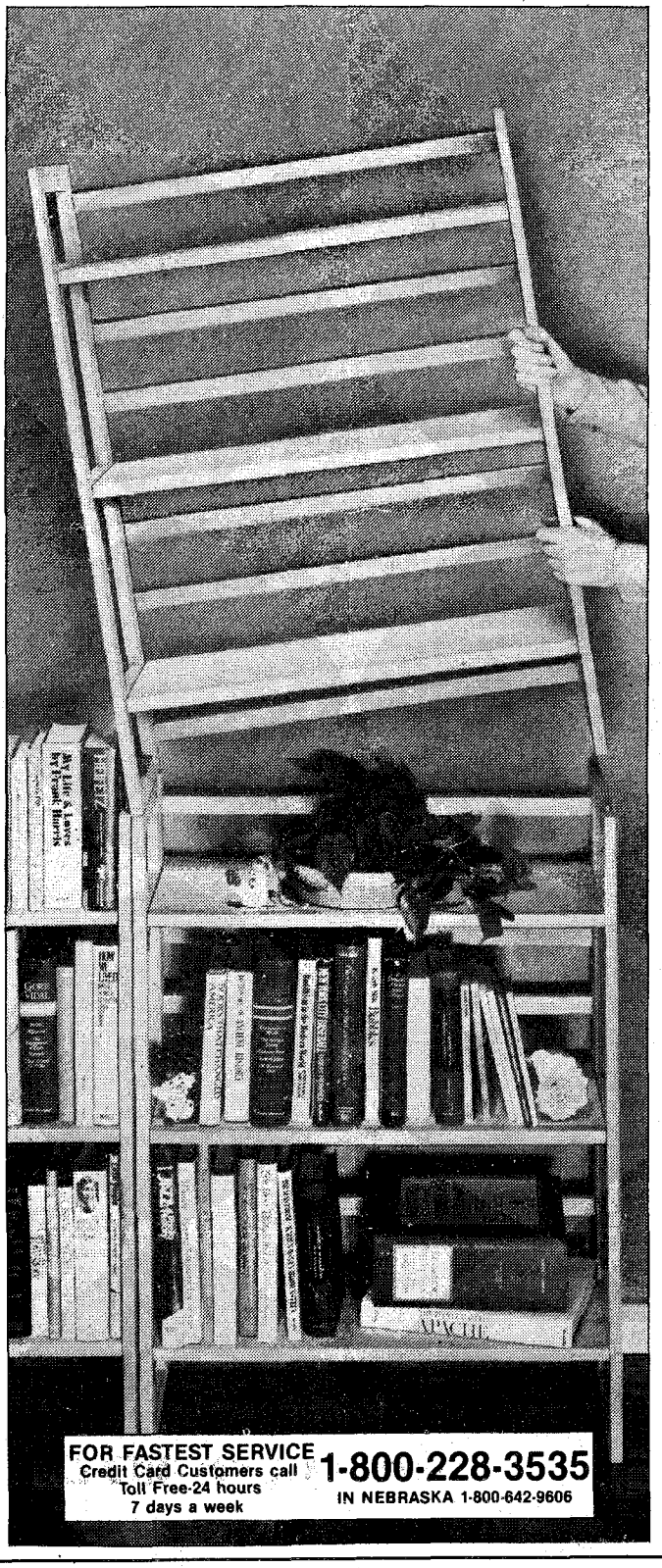

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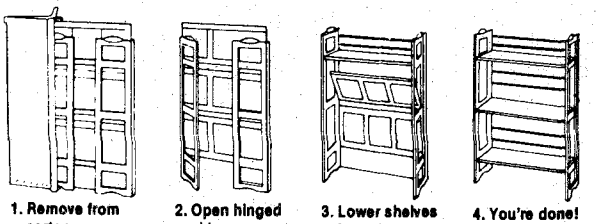

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